Rockwell on Rockwell

HOW I MAKE A PICTURE
BY NORMAN ROCKWELL

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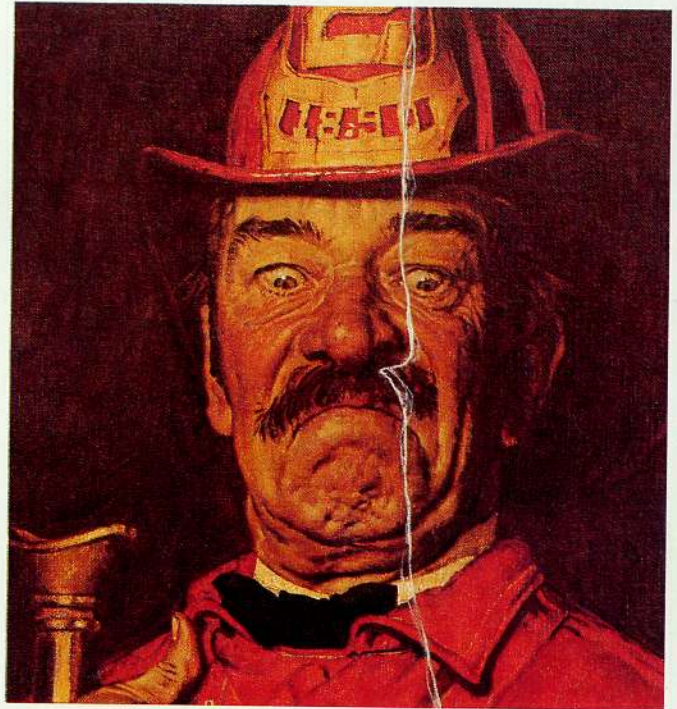
Norman Rockwell is the favorite illustrator of millions of Americans and his pictures probably are seen, recognized and enjoyed by more people than those of any other artist, past or present.

Meet Norman Rockwell

by Alden Hatch

If Doctor Gallup should set his intricate poll-taking machine in motion to ask the American people: "Who is your favorite artist?" the result would be a thundering majority for Norman Rockwell. In fact, you can call the roll of the finest American painters and throw in the great names from Europe, and your average listener will simply look dazed. But when you mention Norman Rockwell, he suddenly come to life and says, "Gosh, he's wonderful! Say, did you see that last *Post* cover of his?"

Rockwell is the most beloved of American illustrators simply because he depicts the American people as they would like to be — as they are in their true hearts. His pictures have warmth, kindly humor and the kind of old fashioned integrity that is never out of date.

"That's the way I see life," Rockwell said to me. "I don't look at it from under the Third Avenue El."

Because he has been illustrating for thirty-seven years, people tend to think of Rockwell as a white-haired old gentleman with a benevolent smile. They should see him at the square dances on the Green at West Arlington, Vermont, his long loose-jointed legs capering wildly as he whirls his partner until she falls exhausted when the music ends. Then, as the next set starts, he leads out a fresh lady and is off again — "Swing your partner! Take her hand! Promenade around the land!"

Rockwell is lean, active and enthusiastic; his smile is more impish than benevolent and his long faunish face crinkles all over when he laughs. When you meet him, you sense that he is pushing out feelers of friendship that grow fast in the warmth of liking and admiration. Despite his earthly attitude, there is a sensitive, ethereal quality about him, as though he really belonged in the mythical world of his folklore hero, Johnny Appleseed.

That is Rockwell relaxed. Rockwell, the artist, works harder than any of Harry Bridges' longshoremen. He brings to his painting not only great talent, but superb technique and artistic knowledge, bought by years of training and unceasing study. But what makes his pictures live is his love of people.

A picture to Rockwell must be more than a beautiful arrangement of lines and planes and voids — it must tell a story. He defends this currently unorthodox theory cogently. "The greatest artists were also great story tellers," he says. "The pictures of Raphael, Reubens and Michelangelo, for example, are not only great paintings, but visualizations of stories that have a universal emotional appeal. The Last Supper is the most dramatic story-picture ever painted. Or take Rembrandt — it was his love of humanity that made him great."

Not that Rockwell compares himself, even in his secret ego, to such as these. "I used to have illusions of grandeur," he said with a grin," but I know better now. I'm a very commonplace sort of guy."

That is one key to his success, for he paints, not from omniscient heights looking down upon his subject, but standing on the ground beside him, looking into his eyes, feeling the same emotions that sway him, thinking his very thoughts. However, no commonplace guy possesses the talent to translate those thoughts and feelings into pictures that find an echo in the hearts of millions of people.

The reason Rockwell talks so much about the early masters of art is because they are his greatest source of inspiration. "Rembrandt and Pieter Brueghel (the great 16th Century Dutch realist) are my gods," he said. "Brueghel painted pictures that are robust and ribald; he was a great recorder of his times."

Rockwell's story-telling pictures make a record of contemporary American life which, while idealized, is fundamentally accurate. He is a sort of pictorial Mark Twain. Some critics call it corn, but when the chips are finally cashed in, and the bright young men of another century sum up the accompishments of our time, they are very apt to discover that it is Art with a capital A.

Rockwell does not yearn to be awarded that capital A — he has no desire to be an easel painter. "I'm no better than my job," he says, "and I put everything I've got into it. I don't want to paint for the few who can see a canvas in a museum, for I believe that in a democracy art belongs to the people. I want my pictures to be published."

That is where *The Saturday Evening Post* comes in. Rockwell has been painting *Post* covers for thirty-two years. Through that medium, and through his calendars and posters, he has probably attained the widest circulation of any artist in all history. He is very content working for *The Post,* though he is far from complacent about his artistic achievements. The requirements of cover art do not worry him. "The limitations of *The Post* are not as stringent as those imposed by the Duke of Milan," he said, "nor are their rules as strict as those of the Sistine Chapel. Yet these limitations didn't exactly cripple the Renaissance boys, so why should I kick? As for the magazine preferring banality, that's nonsense. A *Post* cover can be just as good as you can make it. If you could do one as well as Michelangelo, they'd be tickled to death."

Rockwell is forever thinking of what he would do if *The Post* suddenly gave him up. He has an innocent inability to realize what he means to Ben Franklin's heirs. Intellectually, he is aware that his pictures are its most popular feature, drawing many times the fan mail of any other contributor; but he can't quite believe it. "If they ever do stop using me, it will mean that I have lost my touch," he says. "Then I'll quit illustrating. I won't be one of the unburied dead."

Actually, if he suggested giving up *The Post,* the entire editorial board would arrive at Arlington in a chartered plane,

closely followed by the board of directors in another. For Rockwell and *The Post* are indissolubly wedded. It is a marriage more clearly made in Heaven than most.

Norman Rockwell was born in a New York apartment in the winter of 1894. For forty years, his father, J. Waring Rockwell, was New York agent for the George Woods Cotton Mills. Rockwell describes his father as "a steady sort of person." George Woods, owner of the mills, regarded Mr. Rockwell with warm affection, as a dependable employee and a faithful friend. "We, my father and I, are not the daredevil type," Rockwell said. "He was devoted to Mr. Woods, but stood in awe of him. I have much the same feeling for Ben Hibbs."

The Rockwells soon moved from New York to suburban Mamaroneck, where they lived in a modest but comfortable way. "You could say I was born with a conventionally designed silverplated spoon in my mouth," remarked Rockwell.

By way of contrast, Norman's grandparents were rather gaudy. Grandfather Rockwell, who had married a rich Miss Gettys of Yonkers, belonged to the coach-and-four crowd, while Norman's maternal grandfather, Thomas Hill, was an unsuccessful English painter who conformed to the wine, women and song conception of an artist. In fact, he was such a wild man that, when young Norman began to show signs of artistic talent, his parents scared reaction was: "The Lord deliver us from another artist in the family!"

Mr. Rockwell used to read Dickens aloud to his family and Norman amused himself by trying to illustrate the characters as his father read. The first one that pleased him was a sketch of Micawber.

The Rockwells did not oppose their son's artistic ambitions, but they could not actively assist him. Though the wolf kept a respectful distance from their door, they never had any cash. Norman knew that if he wanted to go to art school, he'd have to pay for it himself. So he set out to earn some money.

By doing the usual odd jobs around Mamaroneck, he amassed the sum of $50. With that, he bought a private mail route to Orient Point, a rich suburb beyond the regular delivery limits. It was a good investment. Rockwell got a quarter from each of the Orientals to whom he delivered mail, which netted him $8 a day.

Michelangelo had the Medici and Rockwell had Mrs. Constable. The rich department store widow, who lived on Norman's mail route, was moved by a happy impulse to become a patron of the arts. She commissioned the boy to paint her Christmas cards. The price was more than fair, and Norman made enough money to go to art school.

Rockwell was fifteen years old and had just completed his first year of high school. He wasted no further time on conventional education, but entered two art schools at once. Mornings, he worked at the National Academy of Design, and afternoons at the Art Students' League under George Bridgman and that delightful old Irishman, Thomas Fogarty. Though Rockwell later studied at the Chase School as well, he feels that he got his best training at the League.

The Christmas card money soon ran out; but Rockwell's masters at the League considered him too promising to drop, so they arranged for him to work his passage by acting as monitor of the studio. That meant that he kept order in the room and directed the activity of the models.

Despite this indication of official approval, Rockwell got very discouraged in his second year at art school. He went to Fogarty, who had become his friend as well as master, and told him that he thought he should quit art and try to make some money. Fogarty proposed that he make money by his art, and sent him to the enterprising young publishing firm of McBride and Nast. Conde Nast gave him the job of illustrating a children's book called *Tell Me Why Stories*. When that job was finished, Fogarty sent Rockwell to the Paulist fathers to do illustrations for a church booklet. By way of contrast, the young student's next commission was drawing human embryos at Roosevelt Hospital. He was only seventeen and slightly hazy about the facts of life; but he learned as he earned.

The McBride and Nast illustrations were a great success. Even then, Rockwell had a feeling for the American genre, particularly boy stuff; and he was soon illustrating stories for *Boys Life, St. Nicholas, The Youth's Companion, The American Boy* and Ralph Henry Barbour's schoolboy novels. He felt completely at home with his young heroes, for he had been brought up on Horatio Alger and the Rover Boys — "the clean cut young American" was his ideal. 1910 was an age of such real innocence that it is hard to reconstruct it. Rockwell recalls that he thought of girls as exquisite, celestial creatures who never needed to brush their teeth because they just naturally stayed clean.

A coming young American illustrator needed a New York studio, so Rockwell and a young friend hired a skylit attic in a brownstone house in a shabby neighborhood. It was a pleasant place to work. Somewhere in the depths of the house a piano usually played gay tunes; and every now and then, there would be a knock on the trapdoor that served as entrance, and one or two of the pretty girl boarders would drop in to chat.

Then one day, Mr. Rockwell stopped by to see how his son was getting on. As his father's head came up to floor level, Norman saw that something was wrong. Mr. Rockwell carefully closed the trap, and then said, "Norman, you'll have to move."

"Why, Father? We like it here."

"My boy," Mr. Rockwell announced solemnly, "This is a House of Ill Repute."

Rockwell's first steady job was art editor of *Boys Life*. The pay was $50 a month, for which he was supposed to edit art, illustrate two stories in each issue and draw most of the covers. He considered himself extremely fortunate, for it was evident that he was on his way to emulate his idol, Howard Pyle. Rockwell still feels that Pyle was the finest illustrator of that era and admits that he occasionally borrowed an arm from him and "maybe a foot from Gibson."

Though Rockwell was happy, Victor Clyde Forsythe, the cartoonist with whom he now shared a studio in New Rochelle, thought he was ready for higher things. He urged Rockwell to have a try at *The Saturday Evening Post*. "Gosh, *The Post*!" gasped Rockwell.

Though Rockwell didn't believe it was possible, he began to fool with cover ideas. The first sketches that he showed Vic Forsythe were glamour girls in hobble skirts, and clean cut men in stiff collars. "Heavens, no!" said Vic. "They want real people. You'd better try some boys."

So Rockwell made two boy pictures in the red and black two-tone effect that *The Post* then used and added a rough sketch of a third idea. A local carpenter built him a big black box to house them. On a winter morning he started for Phila-

Rockwell at work in his studio, a red frame building located about 100 yards from his home at Arlington, Vermont. This studio, the floor plan of which is shown at the right, was built after an earlier one burned down several years ago. The artist is a neat craftsman and his studio is always in order. The door leads to a workshop and darkroom, the stairs to a storage room. The artist keeps his files in the workshop and the storage room contains old and new canvases and costumes. On the walls of the studio hang prints of fine paintings which the artist changes from time to time. He also has an extensive art library, part of it housed in the studio and part in his home.

PLAN OF NORMAN ROCKWELL'S STUDIO

WORK BENCH

DARK ROOM

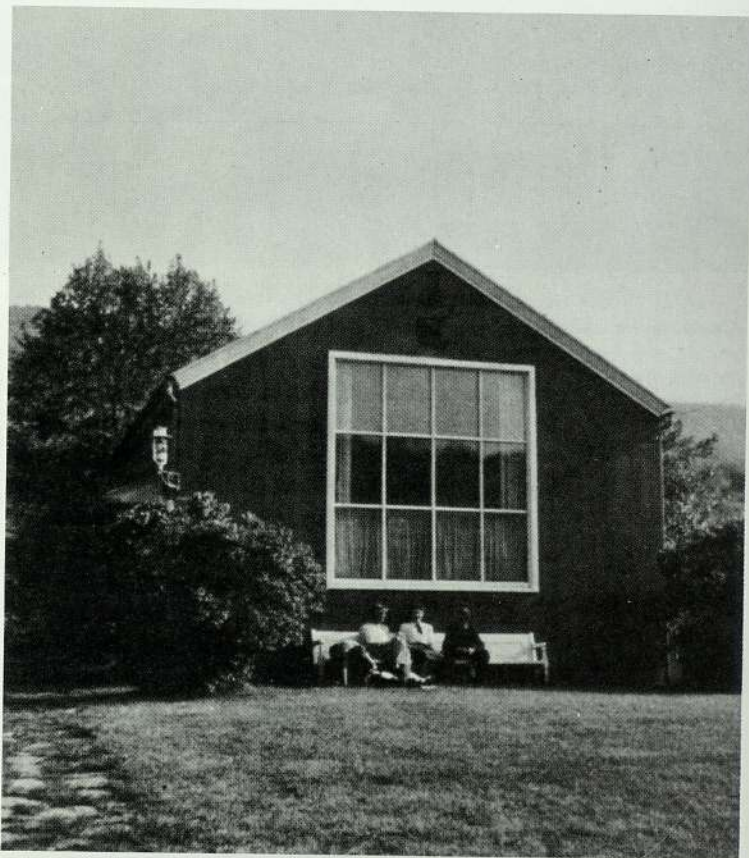STUDIO
MAIN ROOM 23' x 25'

SEAT BENCH
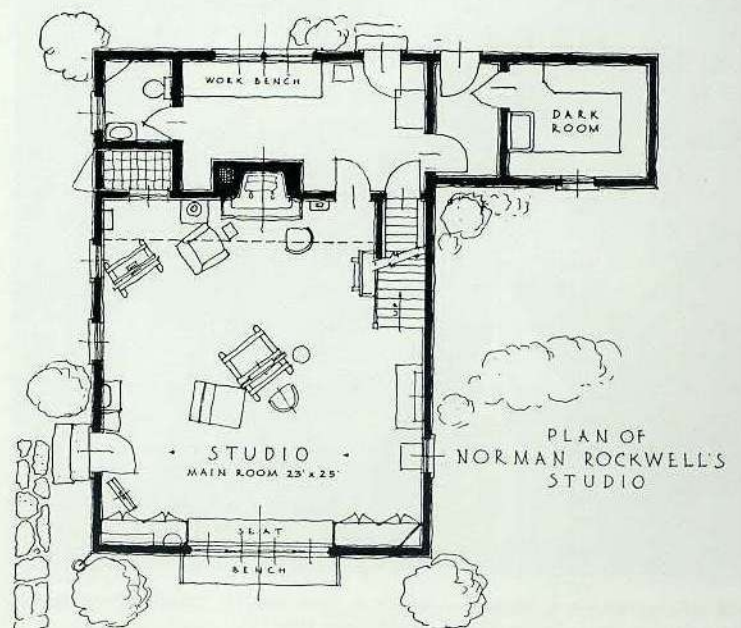
This is the upstairs storage room of Rockwell's studio where the artist keeps many of his original paintings along with stretchers and canvas.

Also in the storage section on the balcony of the studio is a space for costumes worn by models. Part of the wardrobe section is shown here.

Rockwell at work on a charcoal study for a cover for The Saturday Evening Post. The artist has been making Post covers for more than thirty years.

A view of Rockwell's studio which, except for the window, might be mistaken for a red barn. With Mr. and Mrs. Rockwell is John Atherton, fellow artist and neighbor.

delphia, lugging his wares. The *Post* offices were so somberly magnificent that Rockwell almost ran away. Walter H. Dower, the art editor, came out, took the pictures and left the skinny, red-headed young artist sitting in the waiting room. It seemed as though he sat there for hours. People passed briskly in and out. A very rotund gentleman rolled by, turned and stared at Rockwell's box with popping brown eyes. "Is that a coffin?" he asked nervously.

"No. It's for my pictures."

"That's good. I was afraid you had a body in it," said Irving Cobb.

Then Dower came back. He carried no pictures but only a beautiful little piece of blue paper. "Mr. Lorimer," he pronounced the name reverently, "likes your pictures. We will purchase them. Mr. Lorimer suggests that you finish the sketch and submit ideas for three more covers."

Rockwell's first cover appeared on *The Post* of May 20, 1916. So at the age of twenty-two he stood on the summit of ambition, exceedingly surprised at being there. Ahead of him the road stretched fair and straight; he had but to continue on his way. Yet it is far more difficult to travel a well marked road with vigor and enthusiasm than to summon resolution to surmount obstacles; it is harder to innovate from easy circumstances than to improvise under the spur of necessity. That Rockwell continued to move upward as well as onward was due primarily to his capacity for growth and his eagerness for life. It was also due in part to a lack of egotism which made him wonder at his good fortune instead of taking it for granted. He had an uneasy feeling that he would some day wake up and find it all a dream. This humility kept him always alert to improve his work and anticipate new advances in the art of illustration.

Finally, an assist must be credited to George Horace Lorimer. Rockwell regards him as the greatest magazine editor America ever produced. The relationship between the two men was typical of the grand editorial manner of other days, at once intimate and formal. Rockwell expressed his own attitude toward his employer in the phrase, "*The Post* was King and Lorimer was The Editor."

"It was a one man show," he went on, "nothing went into it that Lorimer did not O.K. I got to know him very well, but, though he called me Norman, I always called him Mr. Lorimer. And I never went to his home. Once I got an engraved invitation from Mrs. Lorimer asking me to tea — my wife was not included. I got in a state of unbelievable excitement and bought a new suit for the occasion. Then another engraved card came announcing that due to unavoidable circumstances the party was off."

Rockwell's friendship with Mr. Lorimer was cemented by an incident that happened in the 1920's. Joseph M. Patterson and R. R. McCormick were starting *Liberty Magazine* and they did not care what they spent to get good people.

An editor of *Liberty* came out to New Rochelle one day and offered Rockwell double what *The Post* was paying him. He wanted to close the deal then and there. Rockwell was tempted but stubbornly refused to commit himself.

"My orders are to stay here until you sign," said the *Liberty* man settling in for the night.

Rockwell left him there and took an early train to Philadelphia. He told his story to Mr. Lorimer, ending with, "and he's

sitting there in my studio now."

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked the editor.

Until that moment Rockwell had not decided; but now there seemed to be no question. "I'm going to stay with *The Post*."

Mr. Lorimer beamed. "Well then, I'll double what I pay you," he said.

The year after Rockwell began to work for *The Post* was 1917. As America entered World War I, Norman dropped everything — he thought — and enlisted in the Navy. He was anxious to see action; but he found that he was already too famous to be obscurely heroic. The Navy kept him at Norfolk painting propaganda pictures and portraits of admirals. They also permitted him to continue his covers for *The Post*.

When the war ended, Rockwell got out of the Navy even faster than he had gotten into it. Three days after the armistice was signed he was on his way back to New Rochelle. In the heady flush of making *The Post*, he had married a young society girl; now they entered the social whirl. In addition to his covers, Rockwell was doing a great deal of advertising work and illustrating for other magazines. He had plenty of money and spent it with both hands.

The Rockwells bought a fine house in New Rochelle and Norman built himself a superb antique studio at a cost of $18,000. They joined the smartest country club and accepted the invitations that poured in from people who liked having a brilliant young artist lend distinction to their entertainments. The Rockwells gave some bang-up parties in return.

But Norman Rockwell as a member of the Station Wagon Set was an anachronism. It could not last; and it did not. The inevitable divorce took place in 1929.

Early in 1930, Rockwell feeling very much adrift, and rather worried by the deleterious effect that his personal troubles were having on his work, wandered out to California to pay a visit to his old friend Vic Forsythe. He took some work with him, for Forsythe promised him the use of his studio.

Vic, who had once played so important a role in Rockwell's career, was all set to do a little matchmaking. He told Norman that he wanted him to meet a lovely young school teacher, from Alhambra, whose parents were friends of his family. Rockwell saw through his purpose. "How old is she?" he asked.

"Twenty-two," Vic answered.

"I'm not going to rob the cradle," said Rockwell.

He ate those words, and fast. Three weeks after they met, Rockwell married Mary Barstow.

Fast as he worked, *The Post* was even faster. The paternal attitude of Mr. Lorimer extended to guarding his people against themselves. The moment rumor reached Philadelphia that Rockwell was contemplating matrimony, Lorimer sent his ace assistant, Thomas Costaine, out to the Coast to check up. Costaine looked Mary over like a prospective mother-in-law, but could find no fault with the eager, intelligent young woman who was so completely in love with *The Post's* crack cover man. "She's awfully young," was all he said to Rockwell, but Norman no longer worried about that.

When Mary and Norman returned East, Mr. Lorimer signified his approval with a bridal luncheon in his stately Adams conference room in *The Post* building. Champagne flowed and the wedding cake which was properly massive contained a $20 gold piece instead of the usual dime. The editors breathed a sigh of relief in the conviction that, "Norman will be all

right now."

Their confidence was justified. If ever one man found the perfect mate for another, Vic found her for Norman. For eighteen years Mary has been both an inspiration and a steadying influence on her famous husband. She is always game for a good time, and her laughter can blow him right out of the bleak moods that descend on him when a picture is not going well. They have great fun together.

For some years after his second marriage, Rockwell continued to live in New Rochelle. One summer he and Mary took a trip to Europe with their three small sons and a nurse. It was a pretty expensive performance and the following year they decided on a simpler holiday. They consulted a real estate firm's brochure and liked the pictures of Arlington, Vermont. When they went to look it over, they were enchanted by its white simplicity cuddled among the rounded ranges of the Green Mountains, and bought the first house they were shown for a summer hide-away. One summer showed Rockwell that Vermont was his spiritual home. The following year, 1938, he moved there permanently.

Recently, the Rockwell's bought a plot in a local burying ground. "It should have been a grim business," Mary said, "instead it was comfortable. It made us feel that we will be here always."

Though Rockwell seems to have settled down physically, he has never bogged down artistically. "To stay in touch with the trend," Norman said, grinning, "I keep my ear so close to the ground it's full of dirt."

Rockwell's eagerness for improvement has occasionally sent him off on a false trail. In the early thirties, the talk around the studios was all about dynamic symmetry. Rockwell felt he should know more about it, and hied him off to Paris for a period of intensive study. But modernistic theories and Rockwellian practice just don't mix. His work became slightly schizophrenic and he hastily went back to the old masters.

Another unsettling thing occurred when the Board of Directors of *The Saturday Evening Post* decided that Mr. Lorimer had outlived his time. Rockwell went to Philadelphia to pay a farewell call on his old mentor. The sight of Mr. Lorimer sitting, lost and bewildered, in the great office where he had ruled with benign omnipotence so long, touched Rockwell deeply.

This may have been one reason why he was never happy working under Mr. Lorimer's successor, Wesley Stout. He continued to do *Post* covers for several years, but the old enthusiasm was lost. Instead of a warm welcome, he met constraint on Independence Square. Finally, he could stand it no longer and left for California, as miserable as an unwanted wife heading for Reno.

"I thought it was the end of my work for *The Post*," he says. "Then they told me to come back."

The telegram, which arrived with the melodramatic timeliness of the United States Marines, informed him that Stout had resigned, and the new editor, Ben Hibbs, wanted very much to see him.

In a blaze of enthusiasm, Rockwell prepared nine sketches of cover ideas to make sure of at least three acceptances. There was a joyous reunion in Philadelphia. Hibbs and his whole editorial board crowded around Rockwell, making much of him, and the artist expanded like a sunflower in the sun. After the greetings, Rockwell produced his sketches, and, as is his custom, began to act them out. As he mimicked one Rockwellian character after another, the editors roared with laughter. They were all weak from merriment when he finished.

"Well, which ones shall I do?" Rockwell asked.

"Which do you like best?" asked Hibbs.

"Me, I like them all," Rockwell said with his engaging grin.

"Then do them all," said Ben Hibbs.

The Saturday Evening Post takes no more chances with their favorite son. They have contracted for his entire output with the exception of the famous Brown & Bigelow Four Seasons, Boy Scout calendars and a few book illustrations. Rockwell says, "I know I'm a lousy businessman to put all my eggs in one basket, but I *like* working for *The Post*."

Besides the covers, Rockwell does a series of special features for *The Post* depicting such varied incidents of American life as "A Visit to a Country Doctor," "So You Want To See the President" and "The Common Cold."

Another *Post* feature was Rockwell's most significant contribution to American idealism — his symbolic conception of the Four Freedoms of the Atlantic Charter. The idea was a genuine inspiration which struck him with such electric force at three o'clock one morning that he woke Mary to tell her about it. At dawn he ran across the wet grass to his studio to begin sketching.

Rockwell had so little intention of profiting by his idea that he never thought of offering it to *The Post*. Instead, he and his artist friend, Mead Schaeffer, took the sketches to Washington and peddled them, like mendicants, from one bureau to another, begging only that they be considered worthy of use by the Government. There was not one official with the imagination to see from a sketch what the finished picture would be like; not one with the intelligence to appreciate the magnificent gift.

Rockwell was at rock bottom as they took the train for home, but when the dingy suburbs of Philadelphia flashed past the window, he surfaced like a submarine with all tanks blown. *"The Post!"* he shouted and, grabbing his sketch case, ran for the door.

It took Rockwell seven months to complete the pictures in which President Roosevelt's finest concept is stated in terms of everyday American life. A young workman speaks proudly and fearlessly to a throng of citizens; worn faces bend in prayer — "each according to his own conscience;" a big country family watches Mom put the Thanksgiving Day turkey on the table; and a homespun father and mother tuck the covers over their sleeping sons in a little attic room.

The Four Freedoms gave a tremendous lift to American morale in the war-engendered confusion of 1943. Requests came to *The Post* for millions of reprints. The Government begged to use them as posters. Exhibition of the originals produced $132,992,539 worth of war bond sales; and the O.W.I. distributed 4,000,000 sets abroad.

Though the pictures are peculiarly American, they need no translation. For they dramatize in terms of ordinary human beings, the ancient aspirations of mankind. Nor are they of merely transitory value, for they are an historical record for a dubious future that in one favored land at least, these dreams were realized, and, being attainable, therefore will endure.

My wife and I drove across the covered bridge that spans the

The artist and his wife, Mary, in front of their New England home which is about 150 years old. The Rockwells have three teen-age sons, Jerry, Tommy and Peter.

As might be suspected, Rockwell receives a lot of fan mail. Here he enjoys some of it in the library at the end of a day spent in the studio.

The artist enjoys long hikes through the Vermont hills. Those who accompany him usually return fagged out but the dogs can keep up with him.

Battenkill at West Arlington, past an old white wooden church that is now the Grange Hall, toward the white colonial house where Norman Rockwell lives. The meadow in front of it, where Ethan Allen drilled his Green Mountain Boys, was very bright in the spring sunshine and the house looked warmly welcoming.

Rockwell took us first to his studio. Though it was built especially for him, it looked like a small red barn. Inside was a spacious room panelled in soft gray pine. A fire of white birch logs gave out a sweet woodsy smell. There were easy chairs in front of it and a copy of a Rembrandt self-portrait above the mantle. On an easel near the tall window was the almost finished canvas of Rockwell's superb *Post* cover, depicting the despondent Chicago Cubs in their dugout at a fatal moment of a game with the Boston Braves. Before we started to talk, Rockwell set it out in the sun to dry — he feels that sunshine gives a special quality to a picture.

The remainder of the studio building consisted of a workroom containing a big etching press, the balcony leading to the attic where canvases are stored and a photographic darkroom. The whole place was very clean and tidy. "I'm always neatening up," Rockwell said.

He told us that his original Arlington studio, which was really a barn, burned down some years ago. In the fire he lost the magnificent collection of authentic 18th Century costumes and many original pieces that he had acquired for what might be called his colonial period. He seldom paints period pictures nowadays because he considers the modern age too exciting to be neglected.

"In a way the fire was a good thing," he said. "It cleaned out a lot of cobwebs."

Apropos of the darkroom, Rockwell discussed the use of photographs in painting. "They are a great time-saver," he said, "and I don't see how I could get through my work without them. But you have to be able to take them or leave them alone. They are habit forming, like a drug."

For many years Rockwell would have no truck with cameras. He and the great illustrator, Joe Leyendecker, often used to talk about the camera's use as "prostitution of art." "If Leyendecker had to paint a lion in a cage, he'd get into the cage with the lion," Rockwell said.

About 1937, Rockwell decided that he was being an old fogey about photographs and began to use them in moderation. Shortly afterward, Leyendecker paid an unexpected call at his New Rochelle studio. "The whole floor was covered with photographs," Rockwell said, "but Joe was such a great gentleman that he never let his eyes drop below the level of the table."

Rockwell always works directly from models or photographs — he has to see what he paints. He will go to any lengths to get props he needs. Once, when he wanted a rug of a certain colonial pattern, he sent an agent on a rug-hunting trip through New England. The man bought thousands of dollars worth of rugs, none of which were what Rockwell wanted, so he ended by having one specially woven.

On another occasion, Rockwell had to do a picture of a man clinging to the mast of a ship. He had a studio on Cape Cod that summer, so he bought a mast out of a ship, had it cut off and set up in his studio, hung a real fisherman on it and happily went to work.

In order to get models who accurately represent his subjects,

Rockwell behaves with unmitigated gall. He picks perfect strangers off the streets, out of bar rooms or from their gainful employment, and talks them into posing with the guile of a Fuller Brush Man. Once he took a corporation president away from a dinner at which the industrialist was guest of honor.

One reason he likes Arlington so much is that it swarms with American types. He has only to keep his eyes open at one of the dances on the Green to spot a dozen he can use. It was there that Rockwell met Bob Buck from over the mountain, who, as Willie Gilles, became the arch-typical American rookie of World War II.

"I'm very comfortable with the local people," Rockwell said. "Until the fire, we were outlanders, but in our misfortune, they took us into their hearts. Actually, I'm a refugee from Westchester — I was never happy there. Here it is different. When I go to the Grange, it's the most peaceful evening I can have. These are hard dirt farmers, but they lead an idyllic life. They are so kind to each other, and they have great wisdom. They represent the things I like best about the American character. Not that this is so different from other places; you can find the same sort of people all over America — in Indiana, Texas, Washington State, but perhaps here their characteristics are more marked. They have the atmosphere Americans love."

Rockwell himself leads a rather ideal sort of life. He admits that if he always remained in the Vermont countryside, he might stagnate; but his hectic research trips keep him hopping all over the country. His life is like the Englishman's description of a football game, "They are so very quiet and then so very violent."

Rockwell loves what he calls, "those wild jaunts," and he loves to come back and paint them in his quiet valley, with Mary often reading aloud to him while he works.

Mary Rockwell is a wonderfully vivid person. She is full of humor and all the lines of her face turn upward. She talks very fast in a throaty contralto voice, as though life was such fun that there was not time enough to tell about it.

The interior of the Rockwells' house is very beautiful and simple, colonial with appropriate wall paper and furniture. There are many pictures. There are no servants; Mary does all the work. All the boys have summer jobs. Peter, the youngest, is bus boy at the Arlington Diner, all dressed up in a fancy uniform. Jerry is artistic, Tommy, the most sociable.

Rockwell has no formal hobbies. In his time off, he just likes to putter around and relax. He keeps a bank clerk's hours, getting to the studio every morning between 8 and 9 and knocking off about 6.

Book illustrations are one thing he loves to do, though they are sometimes side-tracked by the pressure of his *Post* commitments. His beautiful illustrations for *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* are the definitive visualizations of Mark Twain's immortal pair. Currently he is working on a book for the Heritage Press, which will depict all the boy heroes of America from Phil the Fiddler right on down to Terry, of *Terry and the Pirates.*

Rockwell finds that he works more slowly than he did, using ever more loving care. He frequently makes many full size sketches before he decides on the composition of a picture. "I suppose a fellow with genius would get it right the first time," he said, "but I just have to keep on plugging."

Perhaps it is not genius, but it surely is inspired plugging.

Rockwell on Rockwell

What you will get out of my course

This course tells how one artist—a fellow named Rockwell—makes pictures. Therefore it is limited to the methods of work and the techniques which I have found useful in making my particular kind of pictures. Other artists use other procedures just as good as mine—perhaps better. But I am equipped to tell you only how Rockwell makes pictures.

After you have learned how I make pictures, I hope that you will not try to make Rockwell pictures too. That would be a mistake. Each artist must find a method of working which best expresses his own individuality. Since no two people are alike, the best method developed by one artist is never the best for another. So explore the procedures of many artists, not with the idea of imitating them, but to aid you in developing your own technique, your own style, your own way of working.

If you follow my own methods carefully during this course, you will come to know without doubt which of them are useful to you, those which are of no value to you and those which you can use with modifications. A second benefit which I hope you will derive from this course is an understanding of how I think and feel about pictures. The qualities which give my pictures whatever popular appeal they enjoy come from the thinking and feeling behind the technique. Technique is only the way I use paint or some other medium to express my feelings about a picture subject. I want you to understand *why* I make my pictures a certain way as well as *how* I make them that way.

The idea and the presentation both are important but there is a tendency to emphasize the technical skill and facility and ignore the creative thought which is the foundation of successful picture making. That is wrong. Keep in mind throughout this course that *what* I do is not as important as *why* I do it. This will help you to expand your own creative thinking and feeling about illustration and enable you to produce pictures which are entirely yours—different from anything I or any other artist ever produced.

You will derive a third benefit from this course because I explain my working methods step-by-step and you can try each step in turn. When you paint a picture, you compose it of different objects and shapes. The success of your picture depends on the proper relationship of these parts to each other and to the one over-all idea. Each element in the picture should have a part to play and it is wrong to say that one is more important than the other. It is the same way with the steps I describe in this course. I have tried to include only those of my working methods which I think are important, but it is impossible to say which is the *most* important. So keep in mind the over-all purpose of the related steps — the making of pictures in my manner.

What you will have at the end of my course

This is a practical course in commercial art and illustration and when you finish it I want you to have something practical and usable to show for your efforts. You will, I hope, acquire some new ways of solving picture problems and I hope you also will acquire greater technical mastery of your tools and materials. And I certainly hope that you will come to recognize the importance of thinking and feeling in creating a picture and developing ideas for pictures.

When you complete this course you also should possess some tangible evidence of your broadened artistic and technical understanding of picture making. You probably will have added to your portfolio of picture samples which should be useful to show to prospective clients in advancing your position as a commercial artist.

How to study my course

The more you put into this course, the more you will get out of it. When you try some of my working methods, remember that it is better to do a lot of work on one picture than just to do a lot of pictures. Quality rather than quantity is what counts although a good commercial artist also must be able to make a picture to certain specifications and do it within certain time limits.

When you try the methods and techniques which I describe, have a regular place to work, a place where you can have a drawing table and enough drawer space to keep your work and materials always handy. Then you can sit down undisturbed to study or draw whenever you have some free time. Try to establish a regular time for working and keep "office hours" just as though you were working for clients. This is not a profession easily mastered. Success comes only with hard work. So you must draw and draw, design and design. Hence the closer you adhere to a regular routine, the better. Try to do a certain amount of work and study each day but plan your time so that on occasion you can put in several hours of uninterrupted work. This is especially important at certain stages in finishing a picture when you want to lose or "saturate" yourself in the job.

When you have finished these lessons, you are to do some work which I will criticize. My criticism will be as professional as I can make it. I am highly critical of my own work and will be no less critical of yours. I also appreciate praise for work well done and I know you do too, so I certainly will praise what is praiseworthy. But it is better for you if I devote more attention to your shortcomings and try to aid you in correcting them. Therefore when you receive my criticism of your assignment, I hope you will not be discouraged if my critical comments about your work seem to exceed my laudatory ones.
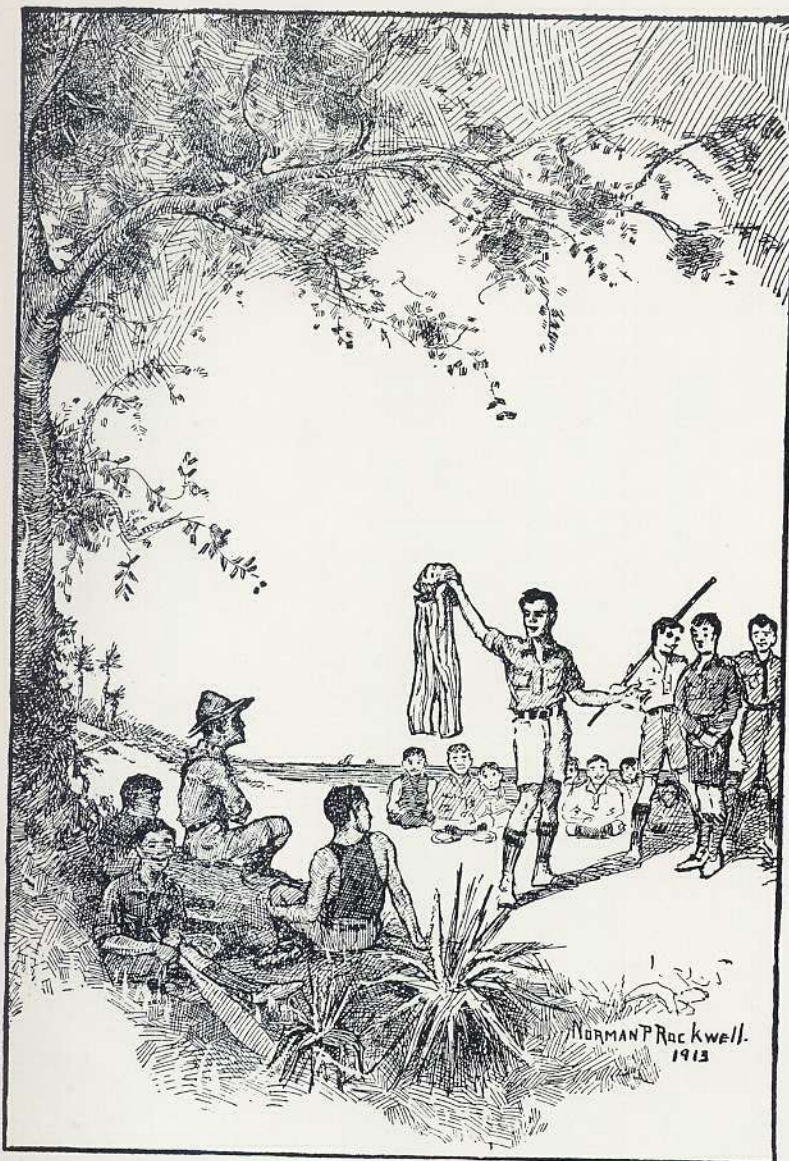
norman rockwell

Getting the Picture Idea

Norman Rockwell's First Commercial Art Work

These illustrations, done in 1913 by Norman Rockwell, appeared in *The Boys Camp Book*, by Edward Cave.

An empty, inviting canvas is interesting to contemplate. The picture which I can paint will be only as good as the picture idea I can produce.

What I Try To Put Into a Picture

My life work — and my pleasure — is to tell stories to other people through pictures. Other artists and illustrators may strive for beauty or color or just to please themselves. I do not. I try to use each line, tone, color and arrangement; each person, facial expression, gesture and object in my picture for one supreme purpose — to tell a story, and to tell it as directly, understandably and interestingly as I possibly can. This is the real pleasure which I get from my work.

On the next two pages are four examples of my paintings, each intended for a different purpose. But in each of them I had just one desire — to tell a story.

A Picture is Only as Good as the Idea It Expresses
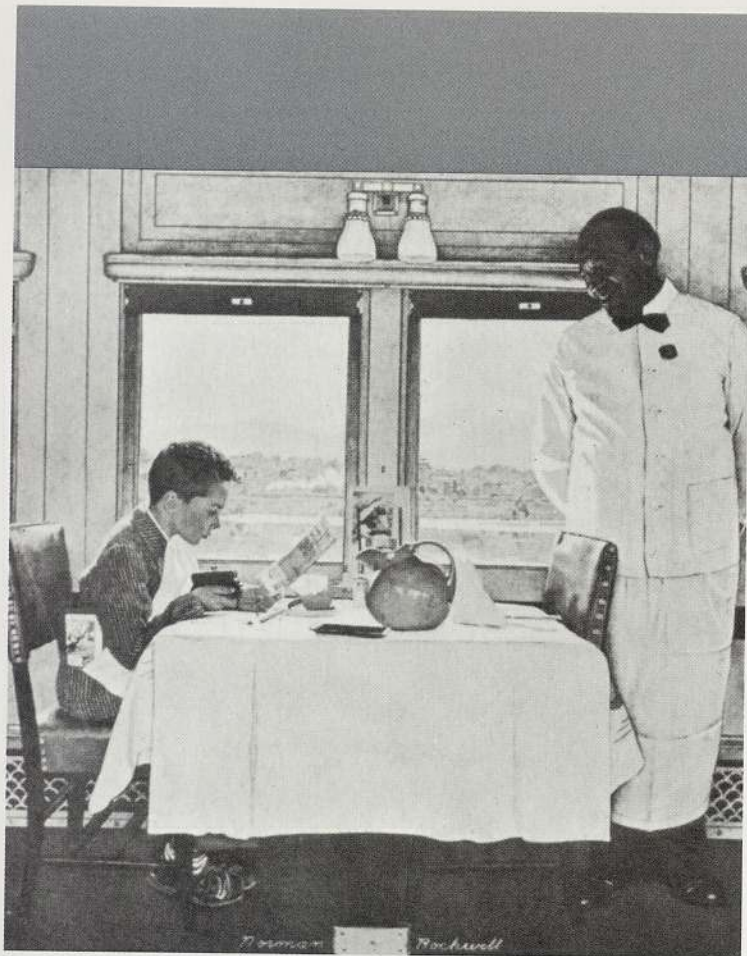
—By permission Saturday Evening Post © 1946 Curtis Pub. Co.

—Courtesy American Magazi

Covers

The main purpose of a magazine cover is to attract the attention of people and induce them to buy the magazine. First of all, it must make people stop and look despite the competition of many other magazine covers on the newsstand. This can be accomplished by a pleasing or startling design, by attractive color, a pretty girl, a personality in the public eye — or by the very subject matter of the cover picture. This last is the appeal I try to make. I want people to look at my pictures, to understand them, to have a desire to own them and take them home to share with others. A good magazine cover should possess attractive color and design, it should convey a direct and easily understood message and it should have some lasting interest. But, most important of all, it should cause people to stop and examine it, thus bringing to their attention the magazine which it decorates.

Illustrations

The main reason for an illustration accompanying magazine fiction story is quite different. An illustration is intended to intrigue the curiosity of the reader and to arouse his desire to read the story, but it should not — as in the case of the magazine cover — tell complete story in itself and thus give away the plot of the story. It should have an element of surprise and, without disclosing the plot, it should tell the reader what type of story accompanies the illustration whether it is a love story, a mystery story or a historical tale. Of course attractive color, fine drawing and good composition are important in the story illustration, just as they are important in any other picture. But first and foremost, the purpose of the story illustration is to arouse a compelling desire on the part of the reader to know more about the story because of the picture he has seen.

—Copyright Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.

Calendars

The purpose of a picture for a calendar differs from the purpose of a picture for a magazine cover or a story illustration. Here it is important to create a picture which will be pleasing to the eye for a period of twelve months. The amusing idea which might be suitable for a magazine cover often will not seem very funny after you have looked at it for a year. Here you do not wish to startle but to create something which is quiet, pleasing — and enduring. Calendar makers have discovered that older subjects, which people have grown to understand and love, appeal more than new ideas. Emotional subjects, containing elements of tenderness and sympathy, are more popular than gags and humor. The color, like the subject, should be quiet and pleasing, and the characters pictured should be people you would like to know or with whom you would like to live.

Advertisements

The task of the advertising picture is still different. Its purpose can be expressed in a few words — it is intended to sell the product advertised. No matter how beautiful an advertising picture may be, if it does not sell the product which it advertises it is a failure. Pictures to illustrate advertisements usually are planned in one of two ways. First, there is the direct approach — a picture of a boy eating "Ma's Bread" with a look of surprised satisfaction on his face. His expression says he is delighted with the product. The second approach is used in what is termed institutional advertising. Here the aim is to create good will for the company or confidence in it rather than to arouse a direct and immediate demand for its product. A picture of Lincoln, for example, might be used to impute honesty or reliability to a company or its product. My examples on these pages are far from perfect.

How I Make a Picture

This spread and the next show, in a very general way, how I make a picture. In later lessons I will go into detail about each of these steps. But I want you to know my general procedure now so you will understand what I mean when I mention one of the specific steps. My method is not necessarily the best way to proceed but it is *my* way. I suggest that you follow my way during this course. Then, having learned one way, you can use this knowledge and experience to develop a method which best fits your own abilities and temperament. This may seem like a long and laborious system but over the years I have found that — for me, at least — it is the best in the end because it saves me many false starts and much wasted time.
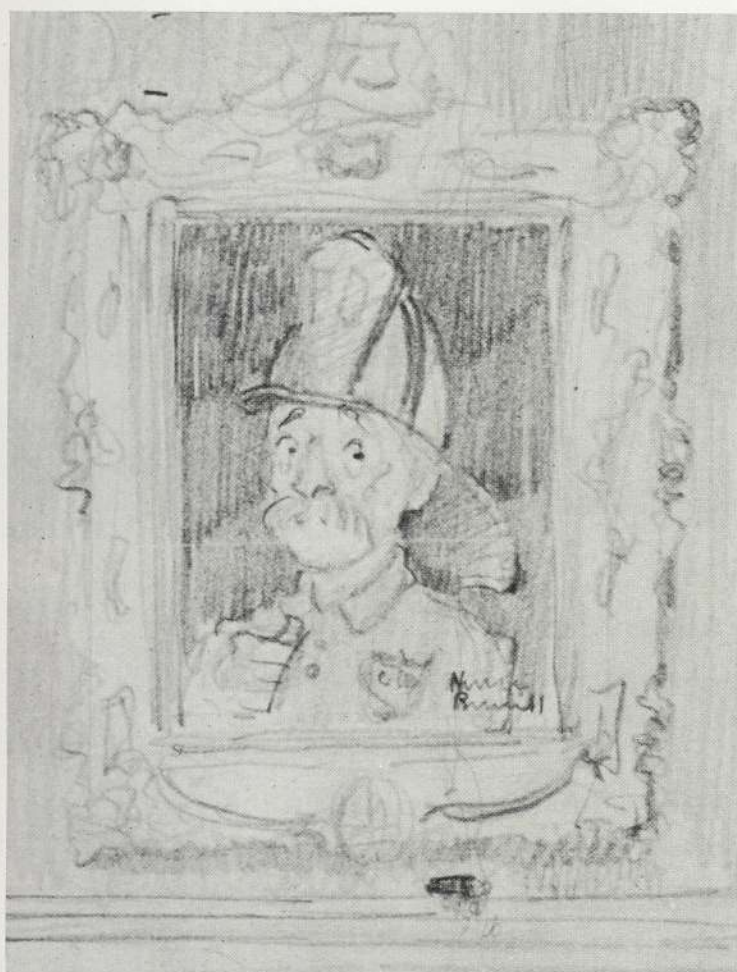

Step 1 — getting the idea

It is extremely important to develop a cover idea which is *good*. No matter how well you paint a story-telling picture, if the idea is not good it will be a failure and people will ignore it. When I have an idea developed to this stage, I try it out on everyone I can induce to look at my sketch. I tell them what I am trying to do, I show them my sketch and I watch their reactions. If people seem uninterested or only mildly interested, I abandon the idea and search for another one. Only when people become enthusiastic do I become enthusiastic too and then I am anxious to get to painting. Never be afraid to discard an idea if it does not seem to "ring the bell." Later I will describe in detail how I start from scratch to develop an idea.
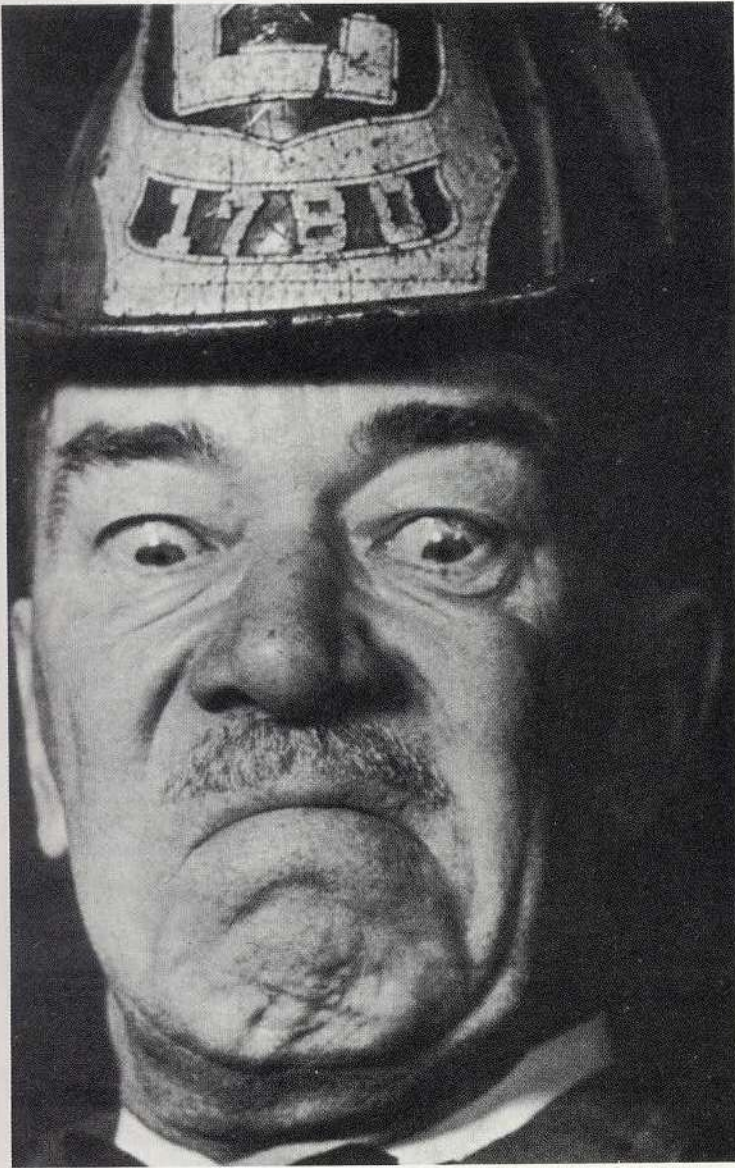
Step 2 — getting the models

After getting the right idea, getting the right models to put over the idea is important. This model (above) is President of one of America's largest book-publishing companies. I tried three men before I found him — and he was just what I wanted. He had the characteristics called for in my picture — and he certainly could, and did, act. Most of the models which I use are my friends and neighbors. Almost anyone will pose for you, especially if you make photographs and work from them, because it requires little time to pose for photographs. New models add new interest to your work, so do not use the same ones repeatedly. And if the people in your pictures are to look real, your models must be real people, not imaginative ones.
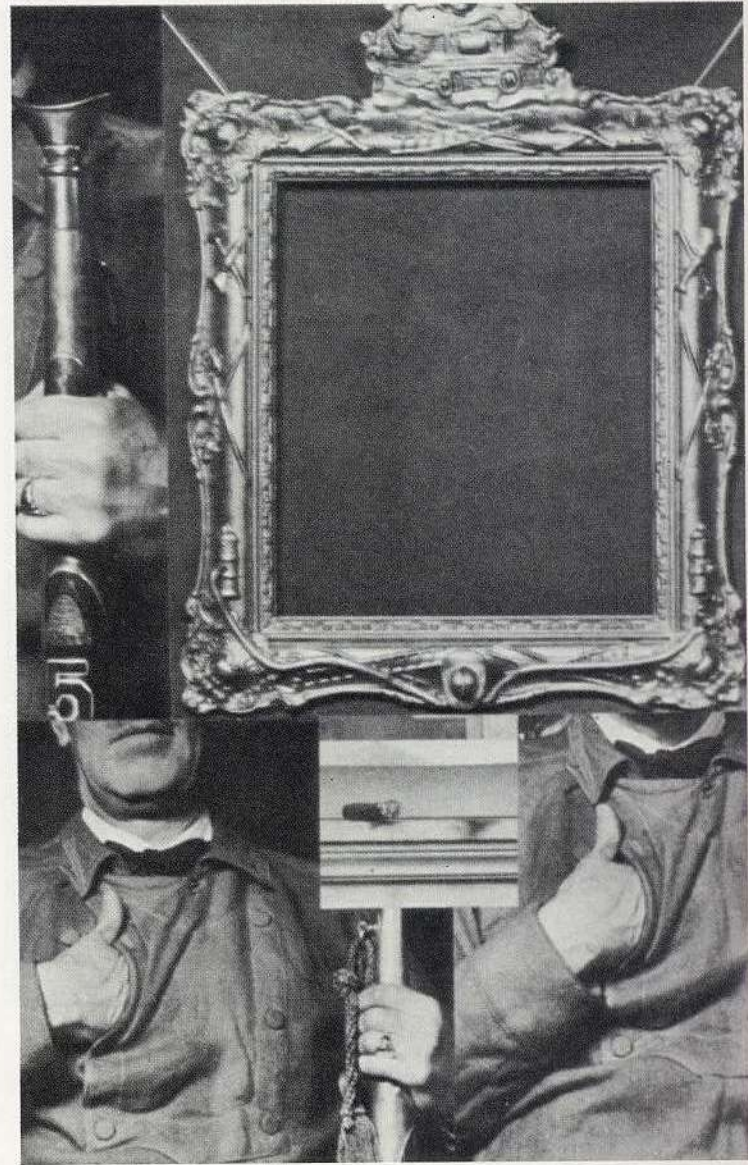
Step 3 — getting the props

The problem of props is similar to the model problem. I go to almost any lengths to get exactly the right objects to go into any picture which I make. Just as it is important to have the right types of people in a picture to express an idea, it is also important to have exactly the right objects. Research often is necessary to determine what props are correct for the idea and the subject. Having searched for and found desirable props, you must be sure that they are authentic. In this case, my entire picture was inspired by this amazing frame which I found in an old junk shop in Troy, New York. I rented the helmet, shirt and horn in New York. I love to get the genuine articles, and the public loves it too.

Step 4 — getting the pose

Spare the model and you spoil the picture — so here I am striking the pose and acting it out myself to show the model just what I want. Once you have found the right model, you must induce him to strike the right pose for your picture. You must be a sort of movie director to get the most out of your models. Almost anyone can act if given enough encouragement. So toss away your pride and dignity and do the posing yourself to help your model lose his self-consciousness and get the "feel" of the idea. Facial expression is of the utmost importance in expressing an idea. So after you have found the right type of person for your picture, coax him to act like the character he is to portray — and he will.
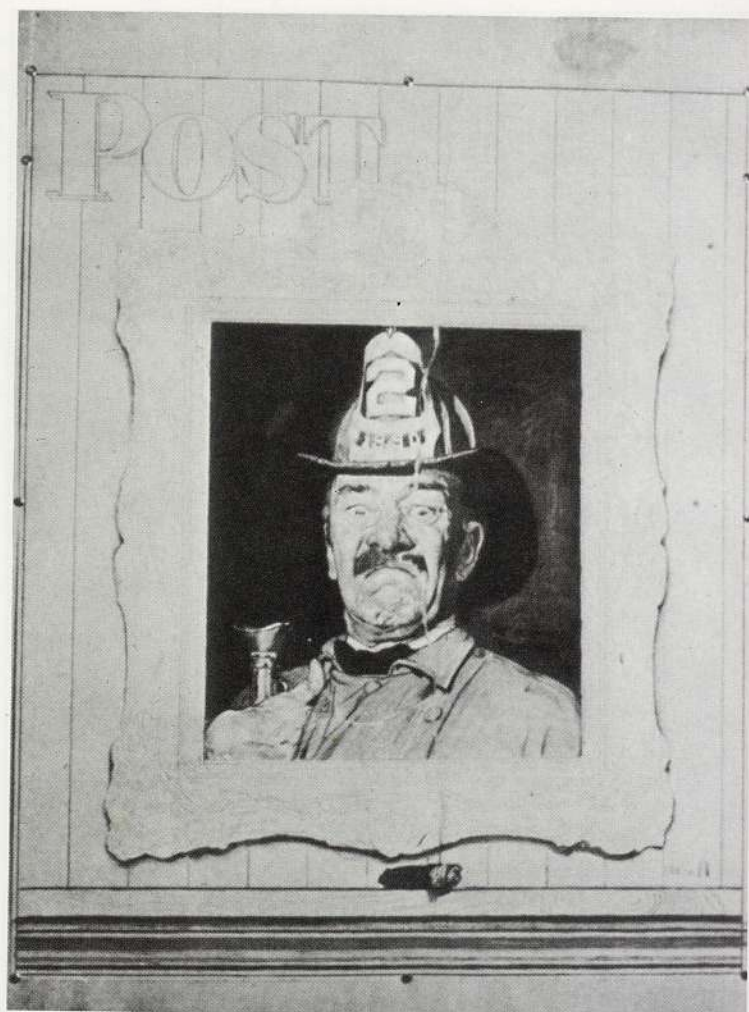
Step 5 — making the preliminary sketch

This is the charcoal sketch which I made after I had selected my model, taken my photographs and assembled my props. This preliminary sketch is usually smaller in size than the finished painting will be. This one was about 20 by 22 inches. In this sketch I try to anticipate and solve each problem of each detail of my picture so I will encounter no unpleasant surprises which might involve making changes after I start to paint. This is a complete expression of my idea in line, composition and tone — in fact, in everything but color. Sometimes I feel that making this preliminary sketch is the most creative part of the whole process of making a picture. Later we will consider all the details of this important step.
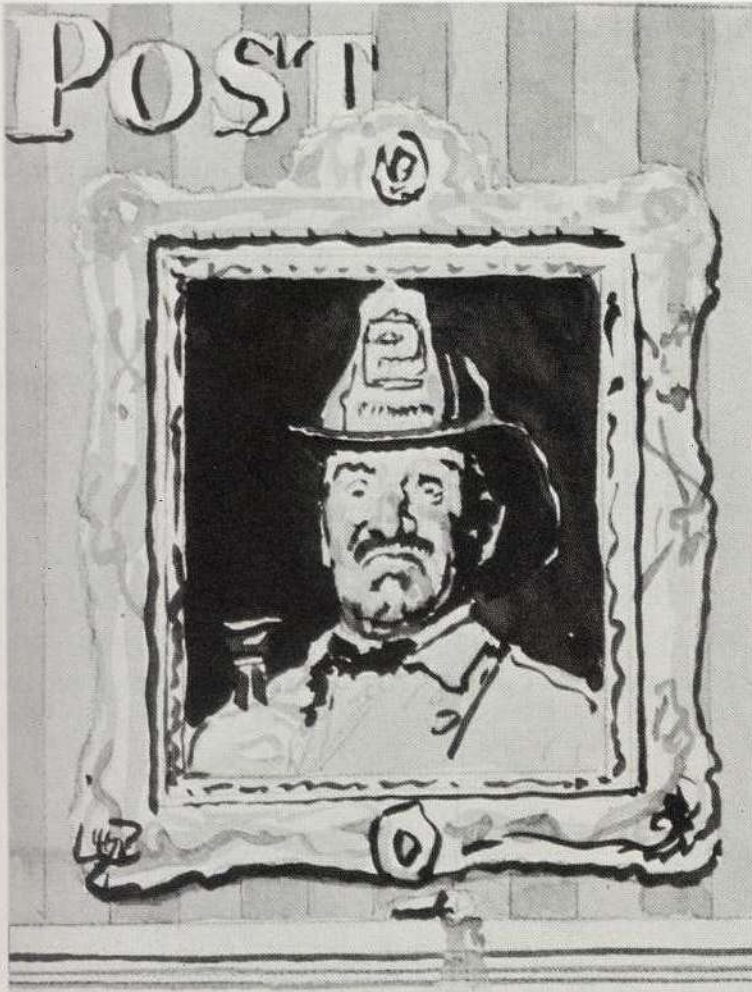
Step 6 — making the color sketch

After doing the preliminary sketch in which I attempted to solve most of my problems except color, I tackled the color problem by making this color sketch. I made it the exact size of the magazine cover. By doing this, I was able to judge better how it would show up on the newsstands. The color, of course, must be strong and pleasing, but it also should help to tell the story which you are trying to tell. Color can aid greatly in expressing an idea and very often can set the mood of your picture. If your picture is an amusing one, the color should express gaiety. Those colors would not be suitable for a sad story. In the latter case, such colors as blues, grays and black might be used to establish the mood of your picture.

Step 7 — the finished drawing

This is the final picture which appeared on the cover of *The Post*. You will find that your pictures rarely turn out to be the masterpieces of which you dream and for which you hope when you start them. But if you have done your best, that is all which anyone can be asked to do. There is always the next job, and you promise yourself that the *next* one really will be the masterpiece — the perfect picture. That is what keeps you going, and if you ever lose this reviving hope, you are finished as a creative artist. Do not congratulate yourself too heartily on what you have just done. Start your next picture with new knowledge and enthusiasm and a determination to make it the very best painting you have ever made.

The Idea—Backbone of Story-Telling Pictures

In a picture which tells a story, the idea itself probably is the most important element of the entire illustration. Certainly if the idea is not good and if it does not interest and intrigue people, any other good qualities which the picture may possess will be lost because they will not be seen. It is an utter waste of effort to paint a beautiful, story-telling picture unless it is based on a good central idea — one which can be readily understood. I will now explain just how I develop a magazine cover idea. Whether you follow my method or not is up to you. I suggest that you try it at the start. Later you will probably develop a method of your own. In all my years as an illustrator, sudden inspiration has never been the source of a single idea. I have had to "beat my brains out" for each one. And each

time I go through the same preliminaries.

I know of no painless process for giving birth to a picture idea. When I must produce one, I retire to a quiet room with a supply of cheap paper and sharp pencils. My brain is going to take a beating — and knows it.

First, I invariably draw a lamp post. I have found that I must start somewhere and if I did not start with the lamp post or something else, I would spend the day looking at the blank paper. So I start with hope and prayer — and a lamp post.

Next, I draw a drunken sailor clinging to my lamp post. Now I have an object and a person. Then I give my brain a little exercise. Through association of ideas I am reminded that sailors must do their own mend

Here's how I develop an idea — with hope and prayer!

First, I always draw a lamp post. I must start somewhere and a lamp post gets me started. Where I will end I never know.
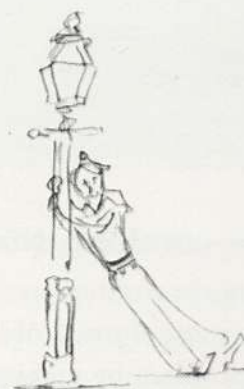
Next, I draw a drunken sailor clinging to the post. Not a ghost of an idea yet but I keep moving and hoping and praying.

A sailor, I remember, must do his own sewing. I did a picture on this subject years ago, so the sailor idea is out but . . .

Sewing suggests mother sewing up Junior's trousers with Junior in them. No good yet but Junior probably has a dog . . .

The dog and boy idea suggests a boy doctoring his sick dog. Wonderful idea! Swell — except that I did it twenty-two years ago.

ing, so I put that down. That reminds me of a mother sewing up Junior's trousers with Junior in them, and I draw that.

At last I am on my way, but where I will end I never know. I keep hoping and praying for a knockout idea. And I keep on making sketches. Usually the first session gets me nowhere. Most authors, composers, playwrights and other creative people seem to have the same experience. Somehow you must condition your brain to think creatively. So I generally end this first session of two hours or more completely discouraged. I feel that I never will develop another idea as long as I live.

Then, perhaps next day, I go at it again. By this time my poor brain seems to be beaten into shape to develop ideas. I keep making sketches which no one but me could understand. I throw them down beside me as I work but I do not discard them. Often, by going over these sketches later, one of them will suggest something which escaped me at the time but which may be the very germ of the idea I am seeking.

One thing I know. When I do get a really good idea — *the idea* — I will have no doubt about it. When that time comes bells ring and lights flash! Then I get all excited. I do not want to try other ideas. I want to try out this one on my wife, my neighbors and — if they like it — I want to get to work on this one — the bell-ringer.

Instead of doctoring the dog himself, suppose the boy takes the dog to a doctor. This is *new* so I better go on from here.

Doctors must go out on wintry nights in all kinds of weather. This is a rather good general situation but not good enough.

The doctor suggests a pretty girl in bed with a cold, hence she cannot go to a dance. Getting better but I did this one too.

How about a square dance cover? No — another artist did this one a few years ago so I must make one more attempt.

The square dance reminds me of a girl dancing and that reminds me of dancing slippers. Another artist did that one too.

Shoes recall cowhide, cowhide recalls cows, cows recall cowboys Still no idea so I must keep going until I finally do get one.

Now, what makes a good idea? First, it must be original. By this, I do not mean that nothing on the subject ever has been done before, but you must have a new slant or approach which will interest people. Second, it must be up-to-date. People like to recognize themselves and their problems in pictures.

A really good idea should also possess a third quality — it should contain an element of humor and of pathos. The most popular idea is the one which makes the reader want to smile and sigh at the same time. Consider a picture of a little boy bandaging his dog's foot. It is comical — but just a little sad.

In trying to generate an idea, I sometimes reach a dead end — nothing comes. Then I begin thumbing through the pictures in magazines and books. This starts me off on another track, and once in a while one of the pictures will even suggest an idea. At other times I go back over my own experiences, perhaps things which happened to me as a child or something which happened only recently. I think of things which I have seen my children or my neighbors doing. I examine every possibility, trying to draw out of other pictures or, better yet, from my own experiences or the experiences of others, some very human situation which will make a good picture.

It is a great thrill, as I have said, when the *big* idea finally comes. I am delighted if others respond to it. But no matter how much they like it, I must believe in it myself and want very much to paint it if it is to be a good picture.

Doodles are important because they contain the essence of the idea. Remember that your finished cover is never going to be better than the basic idea expressed in your doodle. If your doodle is not right in the beginning, the cover will not be right either.

Norman Rockwell

Birth of an idea for a calendar cover

A cover for a calendar, as I have said, must please the eye for several months. Each year I paint the Norman Rockwell Four Seasons Calendar for the Brown & Bigelow Company. The calendar consists of four pictures, each representing one of the four seasons. Each picture contains a three-months calendar.

Calendar pictures should contain characters with whom everyone is familiar. In each series, I try to use the same characters for each of the season pictures. One year I selected a boy and his Grandpa as my characters. For the Spring picture I decided to show them going together on a fishing trip.

The first sketch I made of the pair seemed to me to lack action and to be too static. Next I decided to try them in action but my first action sketch did not seem to make them come to life. Then I tried a profile of the boy, his dog and his grandfather but this too lacked the excitement which I sought.

In this doodle, I retained the profile but I pepped up the figures. As you can see, this injected into the sketch an element of motion and of excitement which is lacking in the others. I finally have my figures rather well fixed and I have my action planned so the characters will "come to life."

In this final doodle I had just what I wanted. Actually it represents only a refinement of the idea I had worked out in the preceding sketch. The figures are placed a bit nearer to each other and they are going down hill to the water. Grandpa has acquired such essentials as his pipe and a creel.

Copyright Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.

This is the picture which evolved from the final sketch. Youth and Age are going on a springtime adventure which each anticipates with the same pleasure. The time is Spring — Winter is gone and Summer is ahead. The characters and the expedition on which they are embarked are familiar to all.

Norman Rockwell

Painting pictures

In doing the Four Seasons calendars I usually show the same characters in some appropriate activity in each season. I try to make the colors suit the seasons and the spirit of the subject matter. This fitting of color to the story you want to tell is very important. It is just one more way of expressing exactly what you want to say, and color can help much in setting the mood and spirit of a picture. Using an appropriate color for each season also helps give the calendars variety so they will not be tiresomely repetitious. Although the color reproductions of these pictures was very good, a lot of the subtle seasonal color I wanted to convey was lost. The paintings were done in oil on gesso panel, size 14 x 16 inches.

S P R I N G

The original of this spring scene was much lighter and more springlike in color. I tried to use the greens and other cool, fresh colors of spring in this picture.

A U T U M N

In the reproduction of the autumn scene, I believe more of the effect I was trying to create was lost than in any of the other three pictures. I tried to paint this picture entirely in autumn colors except for the one little contrasting note of blue in the man's shirt collar. Otherwise it was done entirely in autumn reds and russets.

The Evolution of Covers

The best ideas you will get for covers will develop from what happens right around you. I live in the little town of Arlington, Vermont, and very little happens in this community that I do not hear about. All that happens is grist for my mill — or my drawing board. Wherever I go, I am always looking and hoping for a picture idea. I never get one directly this way, but the experiences I hear about come back to me when I get down to the serious business of plugging away for an idea.

Here is an example of the price of indecision. I finally finished the cover showing the baby sitter in this manner but I kept changing my mind. I still do not know if I picked the right idea for my picture.

This version shows the baby sitter alone in the apartment studying while the baby sleeps in the crib. If I had gone ahead with the first idea, and not tried this and other doodles, I'd have done a better job.

This is the finished job which looks overworked and uncertain. Indecision is bad. Usually your idea is not very good or you are tired. You can make too many doodles. When you get one that clicks, go ahead with it.


My first idea for this Post cover was an artist carrying a frame back to the studio and unconsciously framing himself in a picture. This idea was approved by The Post and I started to work on it.

I made this more finished sketch in color to help me decide just how I would do the finished illustration. Then I began to worry about whether the idea would be understood by most people at a glance.

Because I was not sure that my first idea would be clear to everyone, I started over again. This time I substituted an attendant in an art museum for the artist. Now I had something to be grasped at a glance.
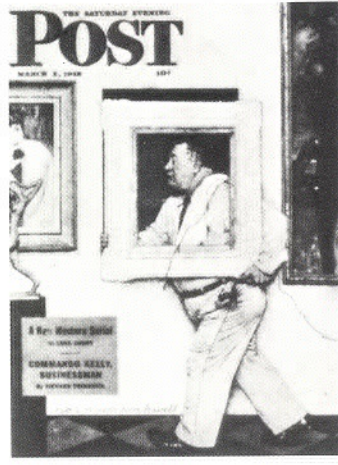

This is the finished picture which was a lot of fun to paint. The character unconsciously framing himself is easily identified, partly by the surroundings in which he appears and partly by his attire.

This is one of the few ideas which I ever got without a lot of plugging. This sketch was made just as I saw it in a dining car of the New York Central Railroad. The boy dug up enough to pay the check.
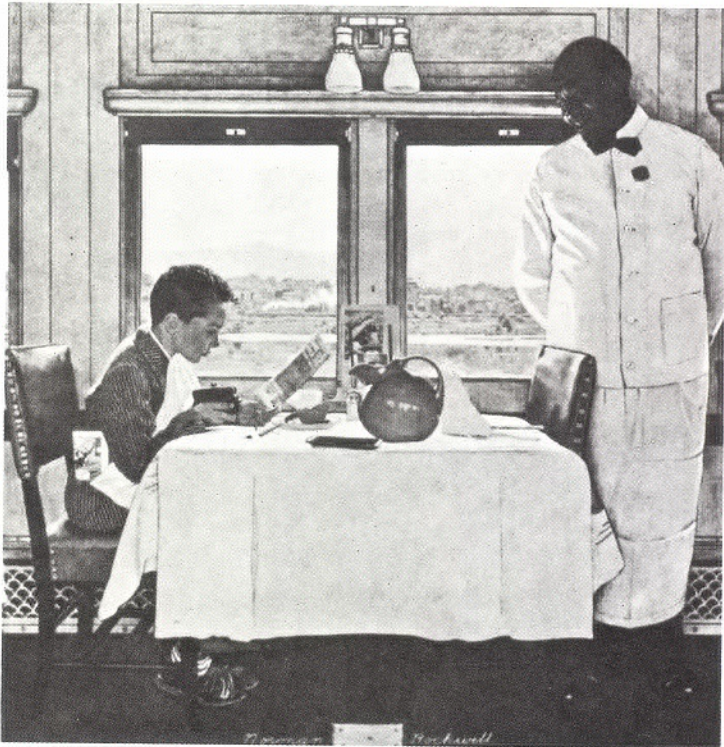
As you can see, I finished the picture very much as I saw the scene originally. This lucky sort of thing has happened to me only two or three times in my entire career. I wish it would happen more often.

I love to paint scenes on trains and I got my idea for this one while riding from New York to my home in Vermont during the war. Travel always means adventure to me and I believe it does to most people.

I made my photographs for this picture right in a railroad car on a siding at Arlington, Vermont, my home. The Rutland Railroad obligingly left the car there for two days so I could make the photographs I needed.

Norman Rockwell

It could not happen often, but here is one case where a magazine cover idea finally became a Christmas card.

The Christmas Card Problem

Fifteen years ago I made the sketch shown here with the intention of submitting it to *The Post* as an idea for a Christmas cover. For some reason I did not send it in. Instead I dug it out and decided that it was appropriate for a Christmas card in 1948. Usually a design which would be appropriate for a Christmas card would not be suitable for a magazine cover.

Greeting cards and Christmas cards in particular present a special problem for the illustrator. The old traditional ideas are the most acceptable to most people, so they are your best bet. A subject for a Christmas card which conveys the cheer and good will of the season is much better than the most brilliant modern wisecrack. And remember that bright and cheerful color puts over such a message much more effectively than colors which are soft and unobtrusive.

The idea must be good

In making my doodles and sketches, I use almost any white, lineless pad, usually one measuring about 8 by 10 inches. I always use cheap paper because as soon as a sketch shows it is without possibilities, I want to be able to discard it without any qualms. If I use good paper, I am likely to find myself trying to pull a poor idea together.

I prefer a 6B pencil, either Venus or Eagle brand. They are very soft and the marks are easy to erase. I use a kneaded rubber eraser for making corrections. Do not carry your sketches too far until you get an idea in which you really have confidence because this only wastes your time.

Do not become discouraged when you cannot develop an idea but just keep plugging away. If, after an hour, you find yourself at a dead end, stop work and thumb through some magazines or books of cartoons. This will refresh you and perhaps give you a new angle to pursue.

I have often — much too often — found no idea at all after a two hour session of trying, but have gone back to it the next day and developed a good idea in a short time. Sometimes a workout of this sort is needed to condition your brain to create ideas and to cause you to become receptive to them. Remember that there are plenty of ideas available but you have to dig hard sometimes to find them.

And this digging for a good idea is all important because unless your idea is really good, you are going to produce a failure regardless of how well you paint the picture. The idea *must* be good. This brings up the question of how to identify a good idea when you get one. Don't worry. No one will have to tell you that your idea is good when you really get a good one. Bells will ring, lights will flash, stars will twinkle. You will know immediately that you have it and you'll want to get busy and paint it and nothing else.

Sometimes you may have an idea which you know does not have much merit but you may try to convince yourself that it has and attempt to use it anyhow, hoping that only you will know that the idea is not very good. Make no mistake about it — if you persist in using this mediocre idea, you are going to turn out a medi-

ocre cover and you will not be the only one to know it either.

And now, a word about the characters in your pictures. If figures are involved in your idea, you can put it across only if your characters "ring true" and are authentic. Howard Pyle, the greatest illustrator America ever produced, in my opinion, used to tell his students to climb over the frame and get right into the middle of their pictures. What he meant was that you should try to live completely the picture which you are painting. This is especially true of the characters in your picture.

If your illustration is to show an old barber cutting someone's hair, try to visualize the barber so people who see him will recognize him as a person and will know, from what you have put down, the sort of person he is. To portray your barber completely, you must decide in your own mind in advance whether he is a married man or not. If he is married, is he henpecked by his wife? Has he no children or has he too many children? You can present your barber to readers only after you know him yourself.

You can tell your reader much about your barber by the way you draw his features. Is he a jolly man who likes his work? Or is he a frustrated old chap, unhappy in his occupation and uncertain of the future. If he is the latter, perhaps you portray him as growing bald. Maybe he wears thick glasses for his near-sighted watery blue eyes, possibly his chin is weak, his neck is long and scrawny, his shoulders narrow and stooped. By such delineation, you can present your barber to readers as a thoroughly understandable living person.

Putting across a picture idea is something like bouncing a rubber ball against a wall. No matter how hard you hurl the ball, it returns to you with less speed than you threw it. It is like that in telling a story in a picture. You must feel love or hate or humor much more intensely than you can expect the people who see your pictures to receive the impression. This ability to "feel" an emotion so intensely that you can project your feeling to someone else is one of the real joys of creative work. If you can do this, then you have creative ability.

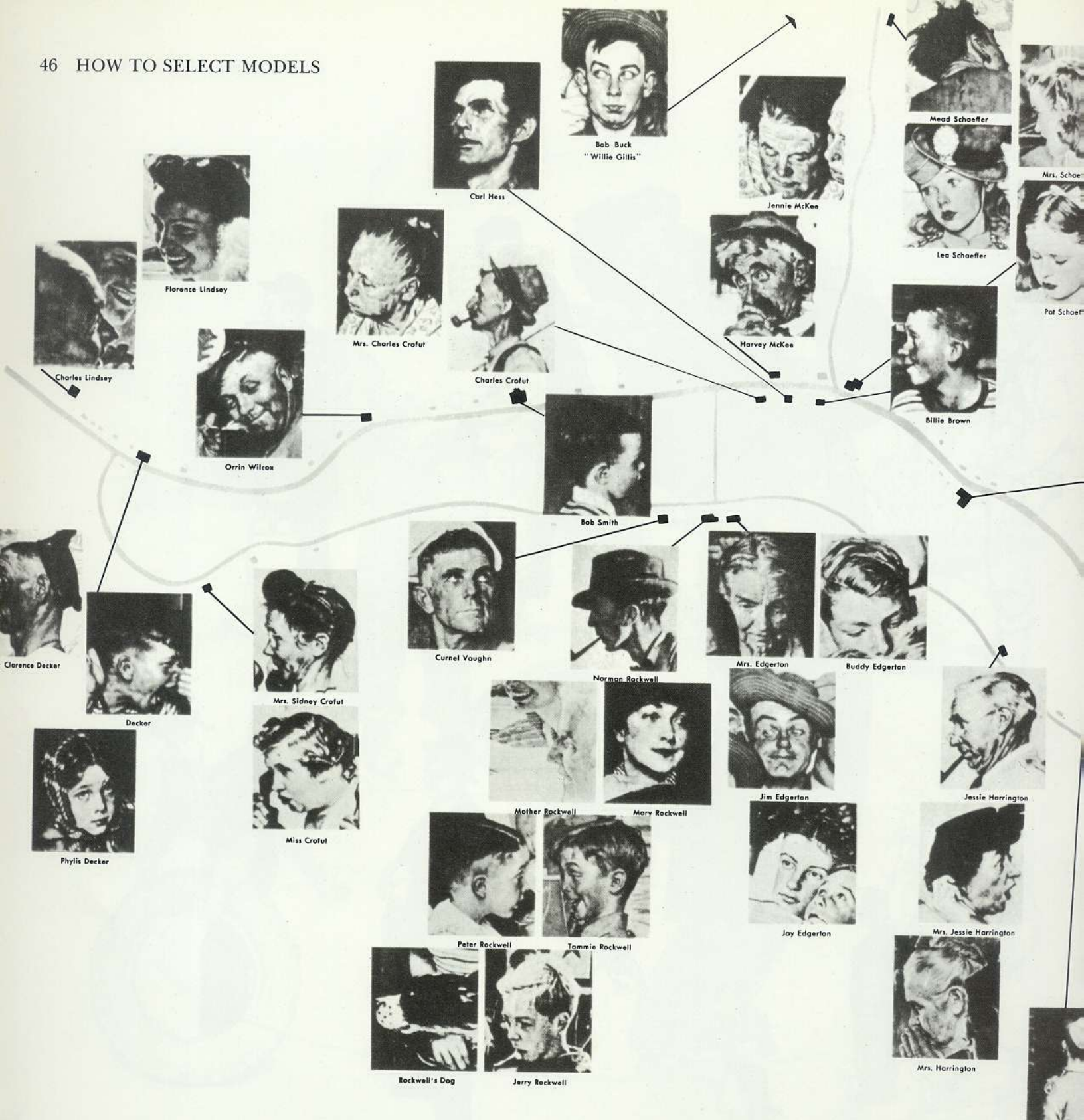# How to Select Models

Norman Rockwell
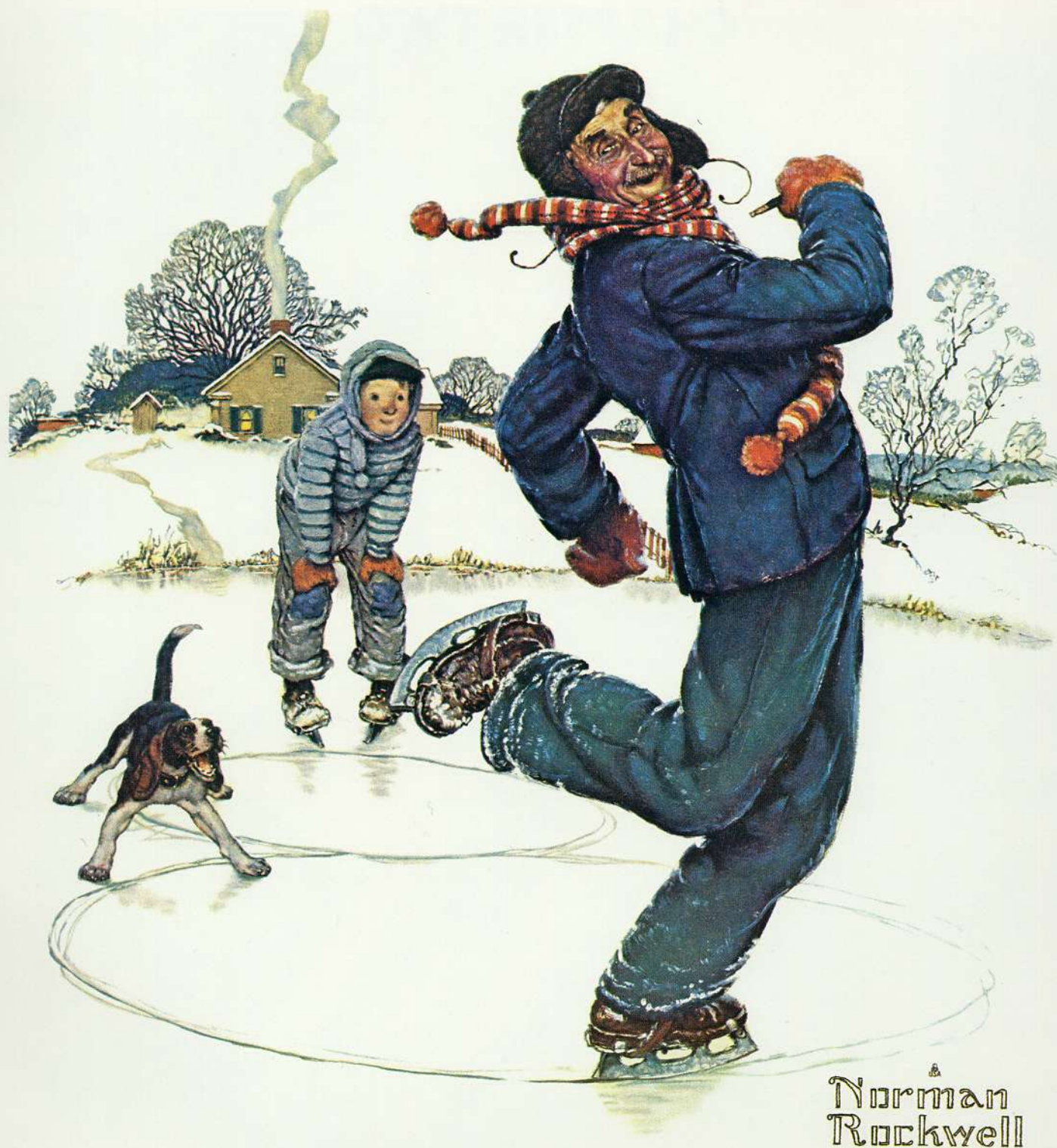
Selecting the Model

Every part of the process of making a picture is important. With me, selecting the right model is one of the most important. Some artists feel that they can create the type they want from anyone but I believe that this is all wrong. When you have a good idea clearly in mind, spare no effort to get the ideal character for it. All of the artist's creativeness cannot equal God's creativeness. I cannot stress this too strongly. Another dan-

ger in depending upon your own ability to create a character of your own is that, sooner or later, you will form the bad habit of repeating your characters and your work will become monotonous and tiresome because it is repetitive. There are few quicker ways to lose the interest of editors. Try three or four types, if necessary, to find exactly the right one for your picture.

To make these sketches, I spent many hours looking for the right models. Such hours are not wasted at all; they are important ones in the creation of a picture. The sketches shown here appeared in a picture of a rationing board during the war that was published by *The Saturday Evening Post*.
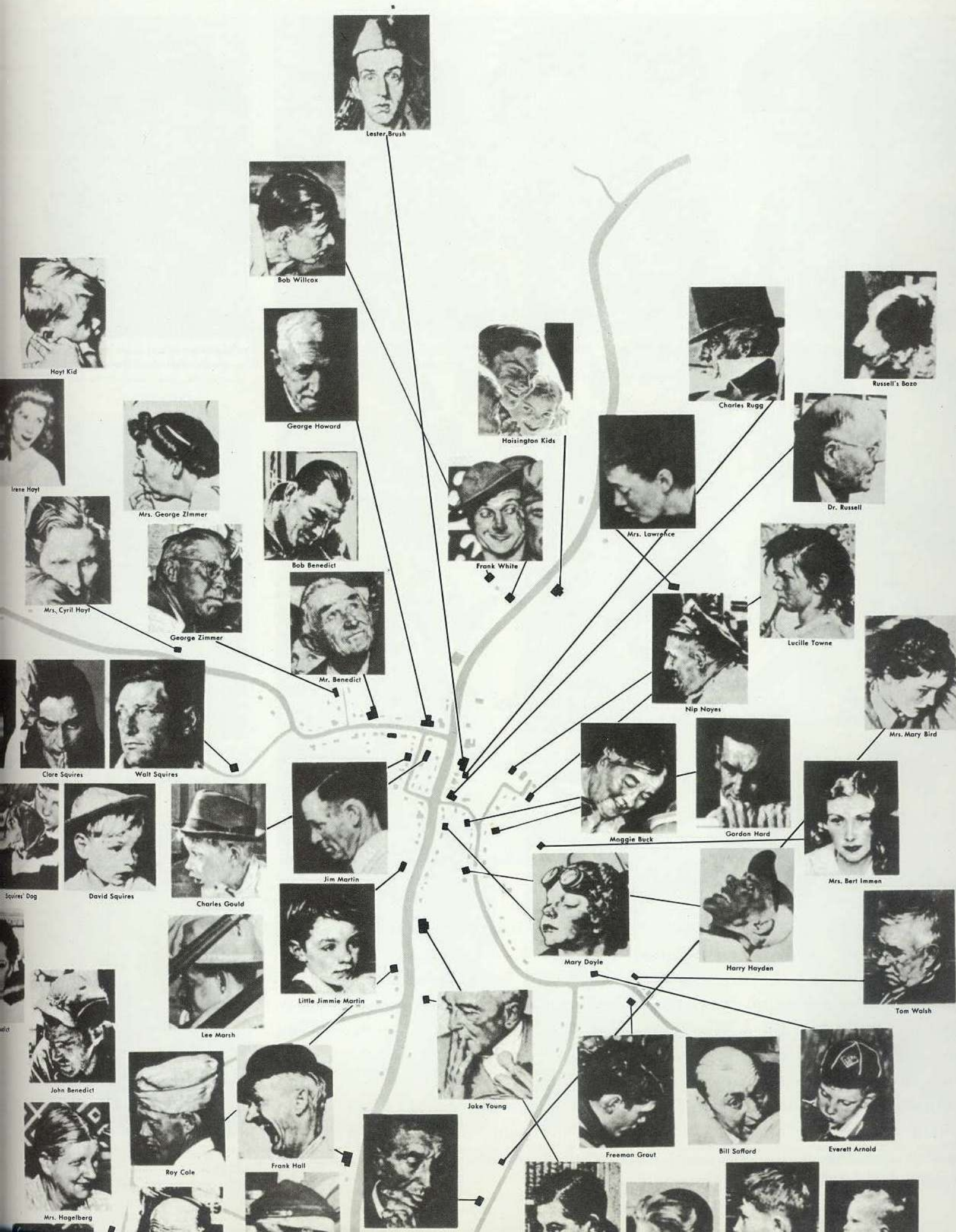
Carl Hess

Bob Buck
"Willie Gillis"

Jennie McKee

Mead Schaeffer

Mrs. Schae—

Lea Schaeffer

Pat Schae—

Florence Lindsey

Mrs. Charles Crofut

Charles Crofut

Harvey McKee

Charles Lindsey

Orrin Wilcox

Bob Smith

Billie Brown

Clarence Decker

Decker

Mrs. Sidney Crofut

Miss Crofut

Curnel Vaughn

Norman Rockwell

Mother Rockwell

Mary Rockwell

Mrs. Edgerton

Buddy Edgerton

Jim Edgerton

Jessie Harrington

Phylis Decker

Peter Rockwell

Tommie Rockwell

Jay Edgerton

Mrs. Jessie Harrington

Rockwell's Dog

Jerry Rockwell

Mrs. Harrington

John Cr—

Mrs. Cross

NORMAN ROCKWELL'S

Map of

Arlington, Vermont

This map shows some of his model
neighbors who have posed for his
nationally known magazine covers
and illustrations.

Cross

Mr.

Lester Brush

Bob Willcox

Hoyt Kid

George Howard

Haisington Kids

Charles Rugg

Russell's Bozo

Irene Hoyt

Mrs. George Zimmer

Bob Benedict

Frank White

Mrs. Lawrence

Dr. Russell

Mrs. Cyril Hoyt

George Zimmer

Mr. Benedict

Lucille Towne

Nip Noyes

Mrs. Mary Bird

Clare Squires

Walt Squires

Jim Martin

Maggie Buck

Gordon Hard

Mrs. Bert Immen

Squires' Dog

David Squires

Charles Gould

Little Jimmie Martin

Mary Doyle

Harry Hayden

John Benedict

Lee Marsh

Jake Young

Tom Walsh

Roy Cole

Frank Hall

Freeman Grout

Bill Safford

Everett Arnold

Mrs. Hagelberg

By permission Saturday Evening Post © 1948 Curtis Pub. Co.

I had wanted to paint this neighbor for years. This *Post* cover gave me a chance to use her in a picture.

Use contrasting types — not similar types — in the same picture. Always strive for variety in your models.

I tried to avoid repetition by using age difference, hair color, thin or fat, hats — anything but monotony.

Meet My Neighbor-Models

These people are my neighbor-models — they are also model neighbors because all of them helped by posing for this *Saturday Evening Post* cover. You have just as good types right around *you*. Keep a models' address book for reference and always pay your models something, no matter how little, because they work more conscientiously that way. I pay them five dollars for a session of posing but you may not have to pay that much. A model should have two qualities; he must be the right type for the picture and he must be able to express the feeling required. (Often you will find the perfect type but he will have a dead pan.) Do not use the same model too often or the public will recognize him and lose some of its enjoyment. The photographs of these models are in the same order in which their pictures appear on *The Post* cover, looking from left to right and top to bottom.

I have used this model several times. He is easy to change because he is a natural born actor.

Many people cannot lift their eyebrows, or frown or smile easily. For me they are of no use as models.

Even a pretty girl must be able to act in a story-telling picture unless she is just to be beautiful and dumb.

You have to be able to break down a model's reserve and make her feel the part and want to act it for you.

This is my wife. I did the poorest on her because I was afraid that I would be either too kind or too cruel.

She had black hair but I needed a change in coloring, so I made it red. I used the curlers just for variety.

Use extreme types rather than the commonplace ones because they lend interest and character to a picture.

Do not be too cruel in painting a person. Make him interesting but never the least bit repellent.

This man helps with the variety. His nose and his cap aid in keeping the picture interesting.

I have used him before but always with his full head of hair. He contrasts with the fellow before him.

This chap can really cut loose with his facial expression. That is something I love in a model.

I used myself here so my neighbors would not be too sore at me for kidding them so much in this cover.

The Six Age Groups

People seem to be just six ages in story-telling pictures. They are babies, children, adolescents, lovers, middle-aged people or old people. These age groups can represent all of humanity. Many of the best pictures show combinations of the age extremes. A baby or child with an aged person has many human interest possibilities and people love such pictures. They love children and they love old people who can understand and play with children. If you are doing a picture showing a child and an adult, make the adult as old as is reasonable for the particular situation. The contrast of ages is very pictorial and attractive.

In each of the age groups, of course, there is an endless variety of individual characteristics. There are the fat and the thin from childhood to old age; the short and the tall; the gay and the gloomy; the comical and the pathetic. In each picture, vary the types in every way that you possibly can. For example, if there are two people in your picture, never show two *thin* people unless that is necessary to tell your story. Make one of them thin and the other fat. In a picture showing a jolly, laughing person, he will appear to laugh all the harder if another person is glum. Pictures come alive with contrasts in characters just as much as with contrasts in colors.

Babies
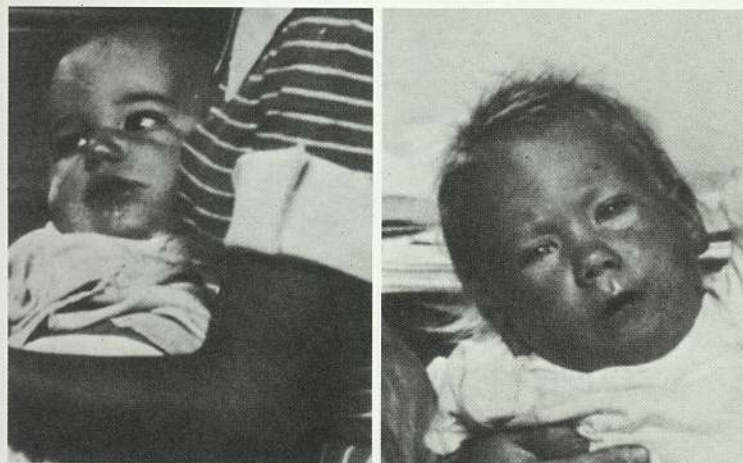
In a picture a baby must *always* look extremely healthy. You can paint thin people of any other age group, but not babies. Babies must be fat and roly-poly. I am not too crazy about painting babies except where they are necessary to tell a story because there just is not very much you can do with them.

Children
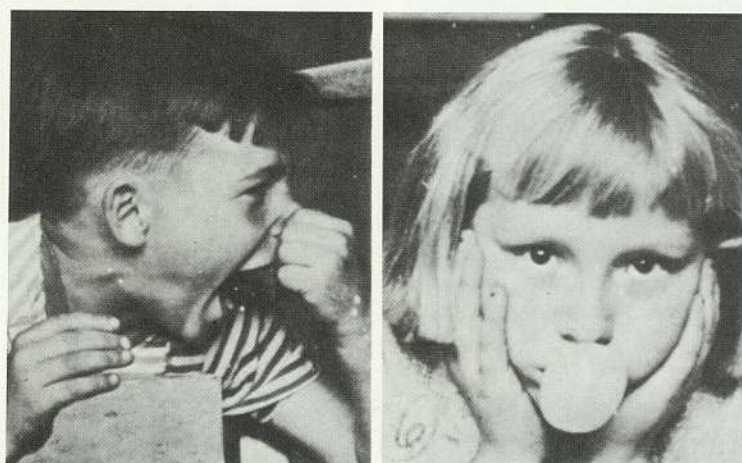
I love to paint kids of this age group — about eight to twelve. When they are sad they are really sad and they show it, and when they are glad they are boisterous and they show that. All of this makes wonderful pictures. Everyone loves kids because everyone has been a kid so, in children, you have subjects with wide appeal — you have the public right where you want it. Kids as models are simply wonderful.

Adolescents

Adolescents are a lot of fun too, and they have great possibilities. They can be humorous or very serious or very romantic — sometimes all of these things at the same time. Everyone except themselves is amused by them and for this reason, if for no other, adolescent boys and girls are fine picture material.
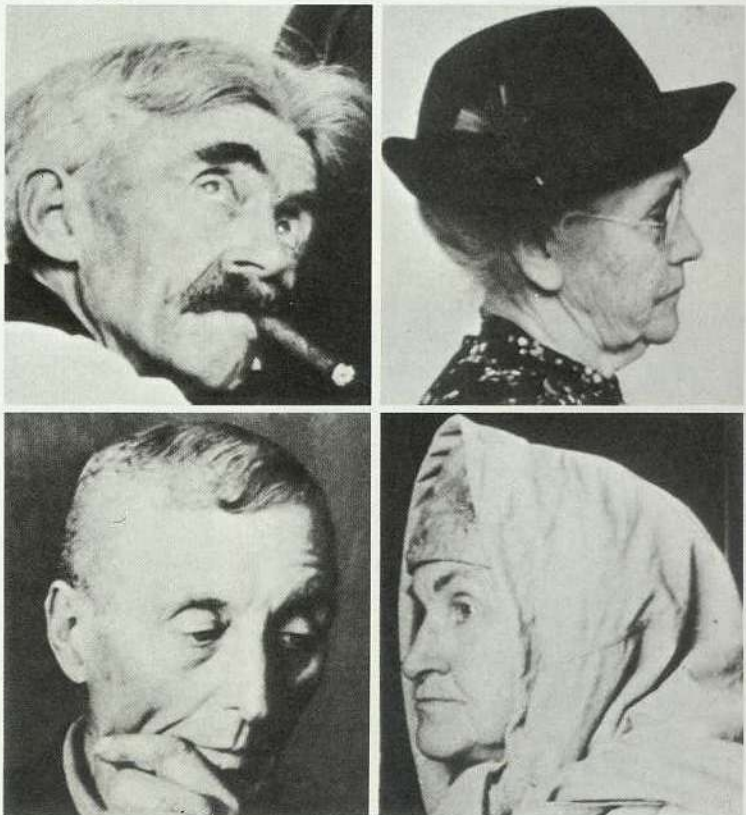
Young men and women

This age is grand but I never can do much with the people in it. I feel that the curse of American illustration is the unbreakable rule that all girls must be shown in pictures as beautiful. Sometimes you can get a little character or humor into the picture of a young man but *never* in the picture of a girl. She *must* be glamorous. An illustrator friend of mine had to illustrate a story whose whole point was that the heroine was homely so he painted her with her back to the reader.

Middle age

The time interval between young love and middle age is extraordinary, but in between there is not much material for pictures except to show men and women as the fathers and mothers of young kids. However, when middle age comes, you again have an opportunity to inject loads of humor and some pathos into pictures of such people. This is the age group that seems to me the most senstitive. Often they are showing their age. Paint them honestly but with kindness and understanding.

Old age

We all love to paint old people. The faces of the aged are expressive and vary from boisterous humor and mellow kindliness to sheer tragedy. I love to paint them. And I can say something else for them too. They pose beautifully.
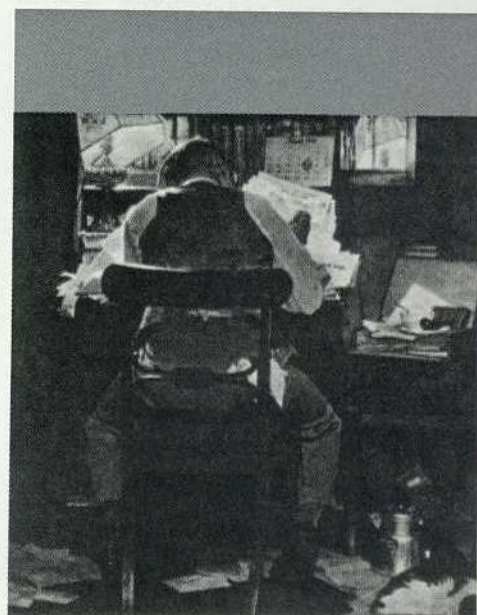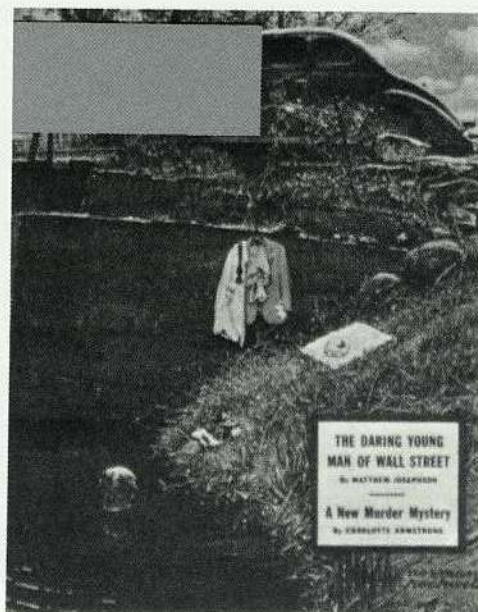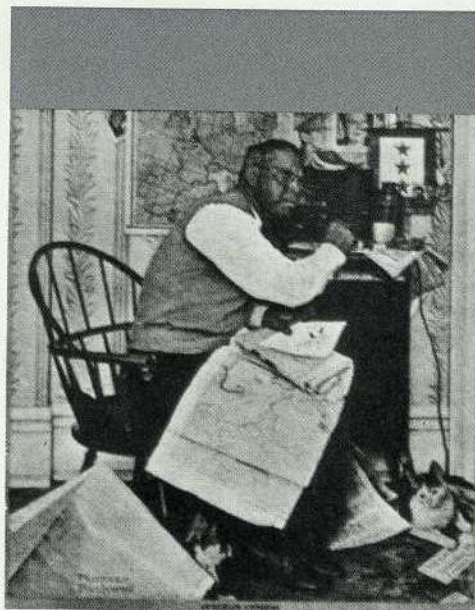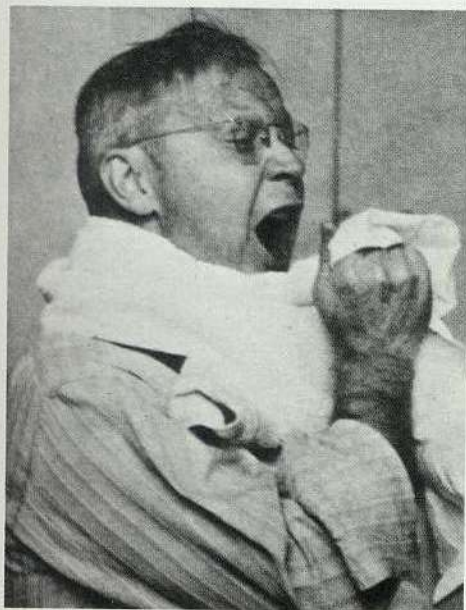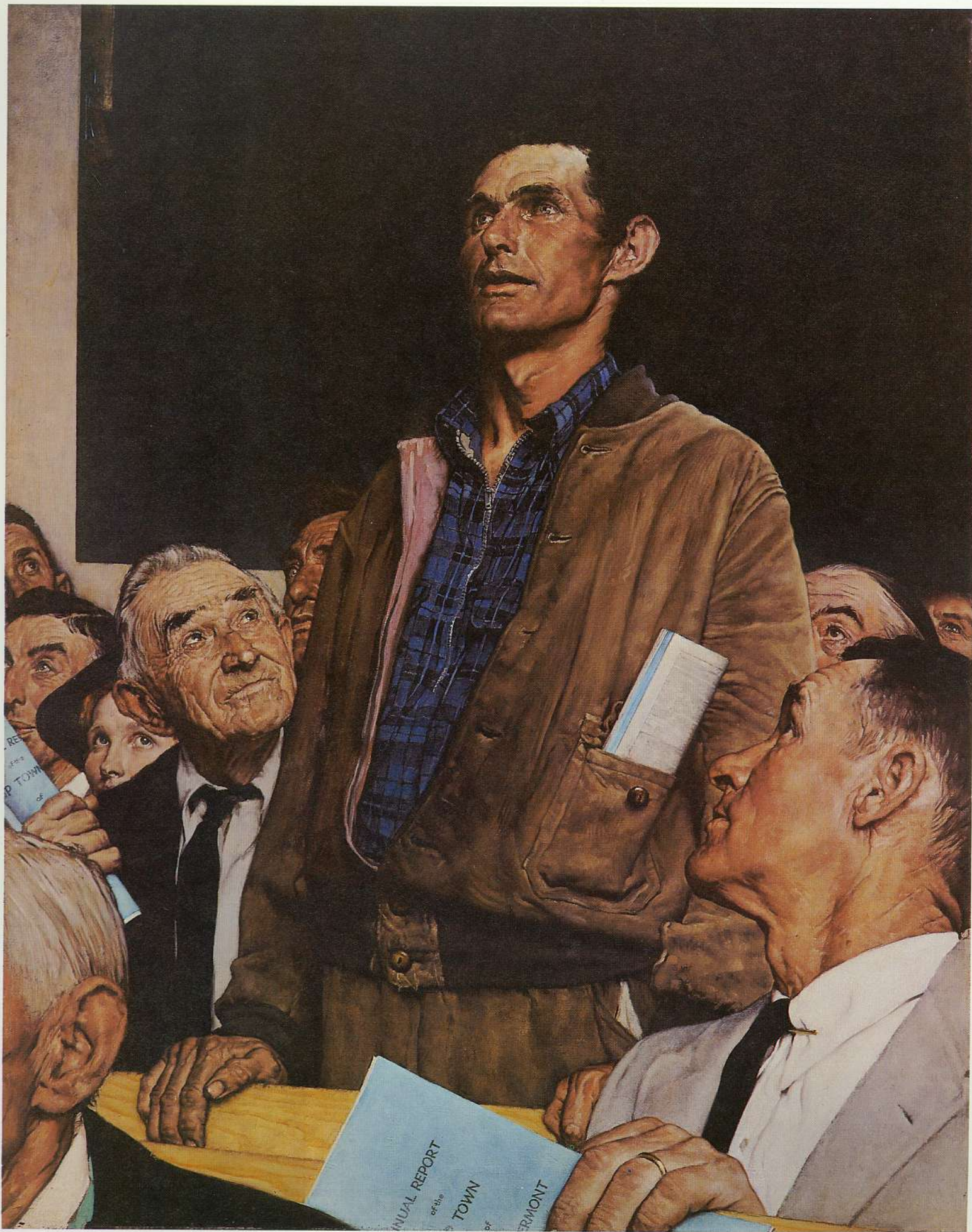
One Model . . .
Many Characters
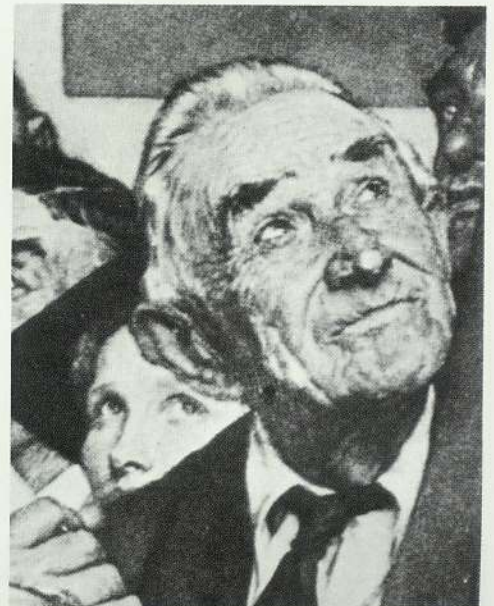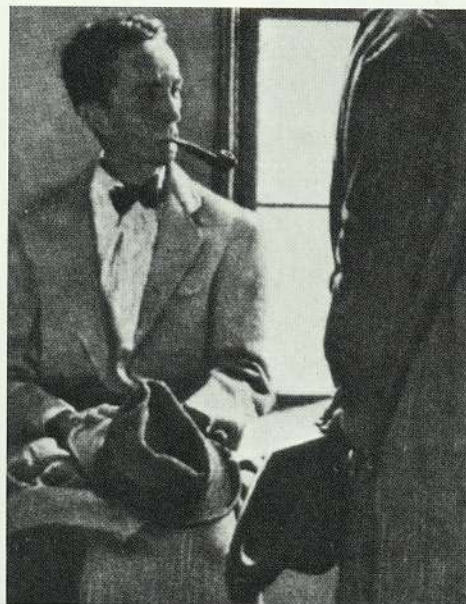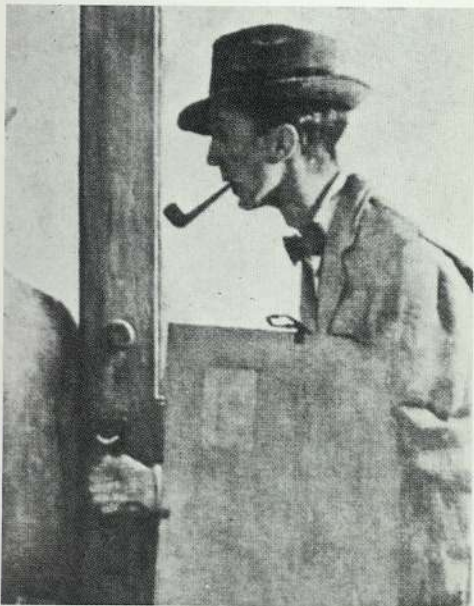
Sometimes you can use the same model for different characters in different pictures, but not often. I am the model in the photograph on the left page and I appear somewhere in each of the pictures on that page, but not as any of the principal characters. I wonder if you can find me.(I guess there's a little ham in every artist.) I have used myself to fill a "hole" in many of my pictures. The model on this page is George Zimmer who appears prominently in all the pictures used here. The reason I got away with this use of the same model in several pictures is because all of them show little "Mr. John Q. Public" in typical American situations that Americans love to see and this model is a perfect Mr. J. Q. Public.

Four versions of one character

Here is a demonstration of how you can make various characters from the same model. Of course, it is better if you can get the exact type you want to show but this is not always possible. And no matter how perfect your model may be for the part, you will still wish to emphasize the character portrayed by the model in order to make this character as compelling and as interesting as possible.
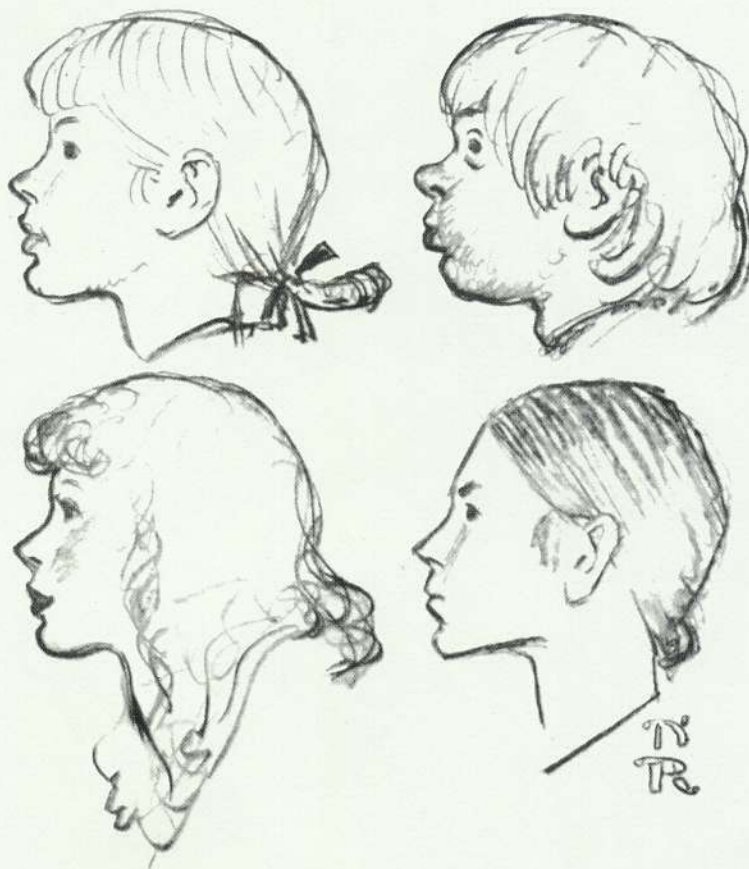
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
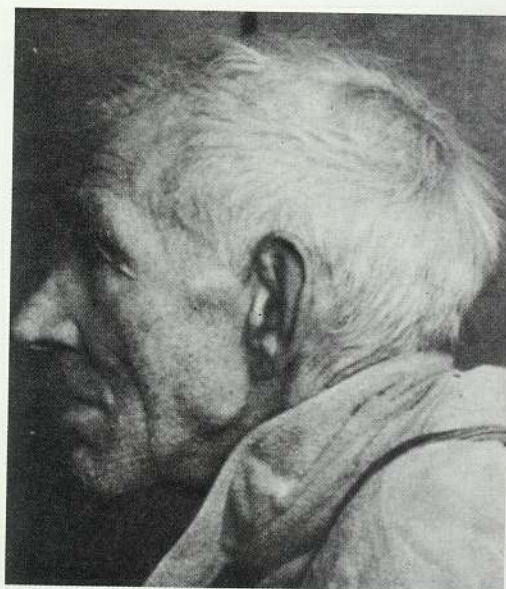
I am always surprised how easy it is to make a farmer into a Wall Street broker or vice versa. Study people all the time and, everywhere you go, try to find out the variations of lines or features which make them definite and different characters. Often when I am in a train or hotel, I observe an interesting person and make a rough sketch of him. It fascinates me to try to find out the characteristics which attracted me and made him such an interesting individual.

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The Importance of Head Structure

I have made these sketches of the skulls to illustrate how important the knowledge of the skull is. I had an art teacher years ago (George Bridgeman) who made us draw hundreds of skulls in all positions. I felt he was overdoing it at the time but now I realize what a wonderful lesson he taught us. Whenever I draw a head, I instinctively feel the skull structure beneath.

Faces are the center of attraction in all human interest, story-telling pictures. It is the faces of the characters in your picture which tell the story you wish to express. You can make people love or hate these characters or laugh and cry with them. It is obvious, there-

fore, that the human face is the most important single element in any human interest picture. If you do not have real skill in drawing and painting faces and their expressions, you are licked at the start in making human interest pictures.

I have always believed that the first fundamental is to learn to know and to draw the human skull. Human faces and expressions vary widely but human skulls vary hardly at all. This fact is perhaps a bit gruesome but it is true. Everyone instantly recognizes the difference between a fat and a thin face but the skull of the fat man and the skull of the thin man are much alike and only an expert can tell the difference between a man's skull and a woman's. Therefore, learn to draw the skull easily from any and all angles and your heads and faces will become stronger structurally and much easier to draw.

In drawing from a model head or from a photograph, always keep the structure of the skull in mind. It helps wonderfully. It also is helpful to lay a piece of tracing paper over the head in a picture and draw the skull for that head. If the head is well drawn, you can easily reconstruct the skull. Whether the head is that of an old man or a pretty girl, the skull structure must be underneath.

The drawings on these pages illustrate what I mean. There is a great difference in the faces of the thin man and the fat woman but none in their skulls. It is only where fat accumulates and gravity pulls it down that the differences occur. The skull of the man with the broken nose is the same as that of the thin man and the fat woman but his nose, broken below the bone, makes him appear as an entirely different individual.

The basis of every head is the skull structure. This cannot be too well understood or constantly remembered. If you can get a skull or a plaster cast of one, get it. Make many drawings of it in every conceivable position. If you master the drawing of a skull, the drawing of heads and faces is far easier and they will be far stronger structurally.

Fat faces or thin faces; good looking faces or homely faces; kind faces or cruel faces — the skulls are all the same. Therefore, learn to draw a skull and you know the basic foundation of all faces. After all, faces are a good ninety percent of the interest in an advertisement, illustration, calendar or cover.

These drawings show the skull structures beneath the faces. It is very interesting and instructive to take a piece of tracing paper and try this on heads in any picture you may have around the house. Try it on heads of some of the figures in pictures by the great masters and on heads drawn by modern illustrators. You will learn a great deal and you can also tell quickly how good a draughtsman the artist is on whom you work the experiment. This may seem a rather grim approach to people's faces but, believe me, it pays off.

Facial Characteristics

Each of the six age groups has special facial characteristics. Here I will describe the characteristics which are of the most use in painting.
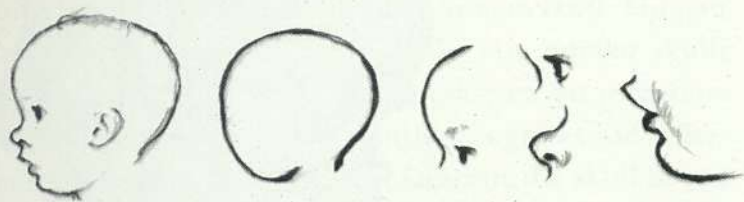
Baby faces

First, the baby! The most striking characteristic of a baby's face is roundness — there are no straight lines. Emphasize this and you will find it much easier to paint a baby face. The forehead of the baby protrudes and seems quite high because usually it has little hair and this makes the top of the head appear larger.

A baby's eyes actually are about the same size as an adult's but its eyes appear larger because the head is much smaller than an adult's. This also is a good feature to emphasize. Remember that a baby has virtually no eyebrows. Its nose usually is round, small and turned up. The lower lip is much less prominent than it will be later and the chin recedes. But remember that the main characteristic of a baby's face is roundness.

When you are drawing any face, try to feel strongly for the character you wish to portray. Paint it with love or with hate but never with indifference. If you do, the onlooker will be indifferent too and that is fatal.

I often think what you put into a picture is like bouncing a ball against a wall. It will always come back less strongly than you throw it. So it is in painting. You paint a picture with strong feeling. That is like throwing the ball; the observer receives less of that feeling and that is the ball returning. Therefore, paint with as much feeling as you can so that the observer will receive as much as possible. Remember, you are trying to make him laugh or cry, love or hate the character you are painting so you must make it strong enough to get across to him.

Of course, all this is useless unless you like and enjoy people because that is what human interest pictures are — one person telling others about people with understanding and sympathy.
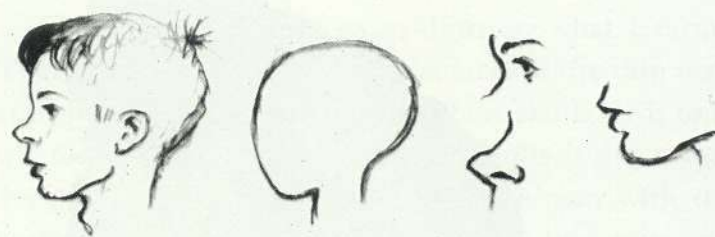
Children's faces

This is the age many artists can't seem to draw. But if you know and look for the special characteristics, it is much easier. I love to paint this age group.

The roundness of the baby is less pronounced now and some straight lines are beginning to appear. The forehead still protrudes but not as much. The eyes are the same size but because the head is larger, the eyes do not seem quite so big. The eyebrows are more discernible, the nose has become slightly longer and is not so round and varies greatly in different individuals. The lower lip does not recede as much and the chin is stronger. The neck appears skinny.

Here is your chance for all kinds of cute characteristics — the untrained hair, the redhead, the funny swipes of hair on the topknots of the boys, the pigtails and braids of the girls. This is a very appealing age and offers wonderful opportunities for pathos and humor in story-telling pictures.

An editor once told me he rated appeal to the public as follows: Pretty girls, children, dogs. I do not know how true this is and it certainly varies at times, but children will always stand high in public appreciation. After all, we've all been kids and know they have endless possibilities for humor, pathos and pep.

A great deal of your success in commercial art depends on your ability to portray this age group.

Teen agers' faces

The teen ager is a lot of fun to paint too. They are the subjects of puppy love and adolescent yearnings and ambitions. They are neither children nor adults but

a little of both. This is true, too, in their facial characteristics. The boys are beginning to train their unruly hair and the girls are going for page bobs and individual hair-dos.

The round lines are beginning to disappear except in the fat teen agers. Straight lines and character are appearing in the face. The forehead no longer protrudes and the nose is longer and thinner. The lower lip and the chin are coming forward. This is the age of clean, delicate lines.

Do everything you can to enlarge your feeling and understanding of people. People love pictures of themselves, so observe and study them constantly. Try to figure out what makes them do what they do and why they do it. Read fine books. If you read Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Dicken's *David Copperfield* or any other great study of people and their relationships, you will learn much from these masters of understanding.
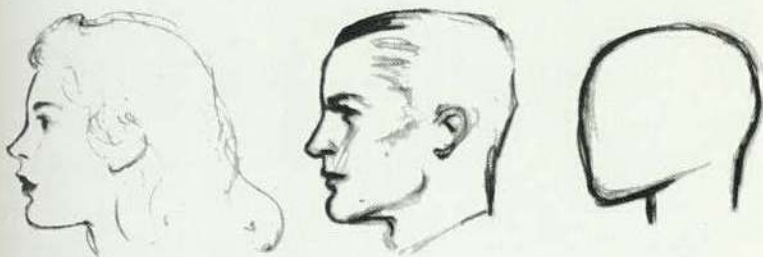
Grown-up faces

This is the age of the young adult — the pretty girl and the handsome man. I think I like to paint this age the least of all. I would not mind painting them if I could be honest and picture the real young people I see around me everywhere, but the magazines believe that the public wants only glamour girls and matinee idol men.

This is, of course, the age when nature is at its best and the great masters, like Rubens and Rembrandt, painted it magnificently. There is the perfect balance of round and straight lines. Another reason, I guess, why I am not crazy about painting this age is that it seems to be the age of beauty and perfection while human interest pictures are more concerned with pathos and humor.

There are regular formulas to be used in painting pretty girls. The eyes should be emphasized and enlarged; the nose understated as much as possible; the

mouth enlarged and perfectly shaped. The hair should be perfectly groomed and lustrous. There should be no wrinkles and as little shadow as possible. I love to paint wrinkles and character so I guess that is why I leave the pretty girls to the other boys. Don't get me wrong — I like them personally but not as models.
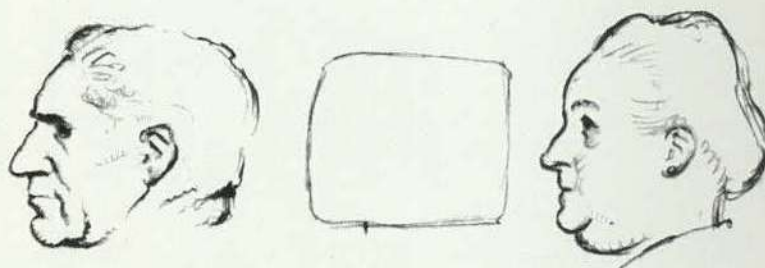
Middle-aged faces

There are many years between the age of young adult and middle age but this period is little used in story-telling pictures except to show the parents of young children. I feel that this age of maturity is uninteresting to paint, so I have skipped from young adults to the middle-aged group, say those from forty-five to fifty-five.

This age is full of character and strength. You can paint it strongly and honestly because no one insists that these people be glorified, thank goodness! How these people have lived shows now in their faces. Their vices and their virtues, their strength and their weaknesses are all waiting for you to put down.
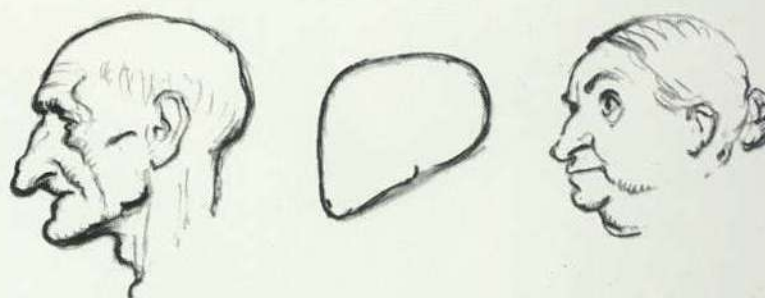
Old faces

The old people and the young kids are really the best of all for pictures and when they can be combined in a picture, they are unbeatable. The old people have lived so long that they are not ashamed to be humorous and they can be full of pathos. The lines in their faces tell of their entire lives and characters. It is all there to be painted.
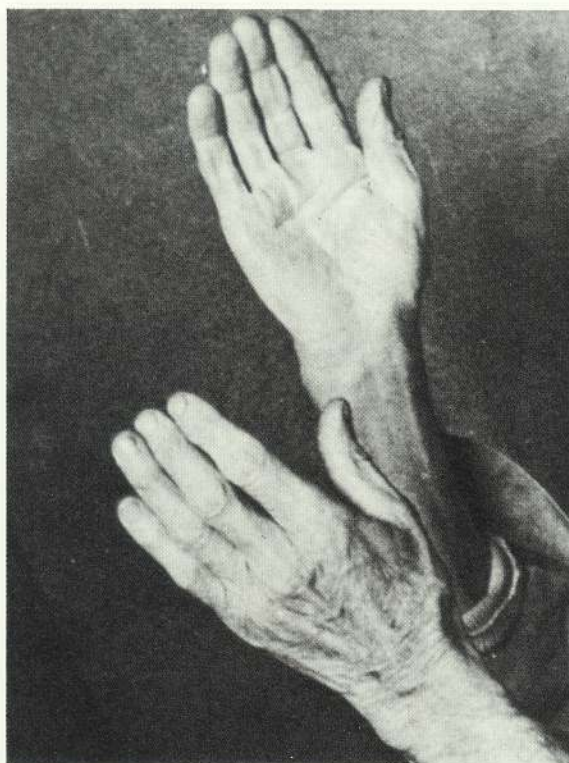
Norman
Rockwell

CHAPTER THREE

The Importance of Detail

Hands are second in importance only to heads and their importance lies in the fact that so much can be expressed by them —they can help to tell your story. Very often you will see a picture that is well executed except for the hands. They are difficult to draw and paint well but every effort to do them well is rewarding. In my picture "Freedom of Worship" I depended on the hands for half the message I wished to get over.

Hands

Hands are next to heads in importance in pictures containing figures. This is because they can express so much and because they can be such a great help in telling a story. There is a saying that you can tell how good a draftsman an artist is by the hands he draws and there is some truth in this. Frequently you will see a picture that is well executed — except for the hands. Hands are difficult to draw and to paint but you will be well repaid for all the time and effort you put into doing them well.

In my picture, "Freedom of Worship," reproduced here, I depended on the hands alone to convey about half of the message I wished to put over. You can express any human emotion with hands. You can excite pity with them or you can make people laugh. Use them in every picture you can and you will get a fuller expression of the ideas you are portraying with their wonderful help.

While hands are difficult to draw, you must master them if you are to succeed as a commercial artist and illustrator because if your hands are not right, your entire picture is weakened. It is not the purpose of

this course to teach you to draw because I assume that you already know how. But it never hurts anyone to take a short refresher course now and then. I have been making pictures for a good many years, but even today I often make sketches of hands that interest me.

Try drawing hands which, by themselves, will express such an emotion as avarice or joy or love or hunger. Never lovingly finish a head, and then carelessly bang out the hands. Try to get just as much character into your hands as in the head. Consider the chubby, ineffectual hands of a baby and the gnarled and wrinkled hands of an aged person. Each pair of hands tells the story of that person's life almost as well as the faces do. Albrecht Durer's painting of just two hands in a pose of prayer is, in my opinion, one of the most moving pictures ever made.

You need every device you can employ to aid you in telling a picture story and hands are a great help. The pictures on the accompanying pages show you how I use hands and what an essential part they play in telling stories in pictures.

EACH ACCORDING TO THE DICTATE
OF HIS OWN CONSCIENCE

Without hands I could not have told this story. People seemed more amused by the mother counting her brood than by the larger idea of the census taking.

YOUNG AMES RETURNS By WALTER D. EDMON[DS]

In this picture I tried to express comedy in the H[...] as against reverence in the Thanksgiving cover.
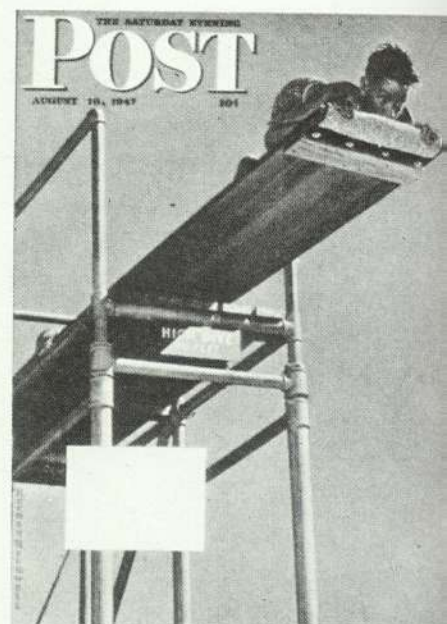
Here, the tense, gripping, position of the hands to convey the kid's anxiety. I over emphasize[...] action as much as I could without losing realism[...]

THE GREAT MONOPOLY MYSTERY By RAYMOND MOLEY
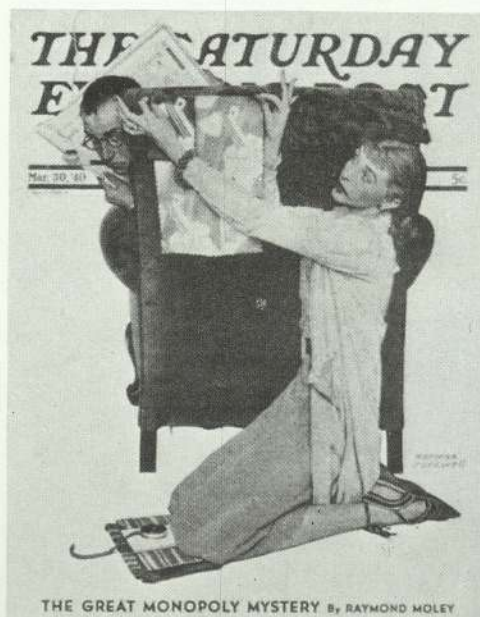
Fine, well-tended hands are all right but I prefer the ones with more character. However, they are all [...]

HAPPY LAND
A Westfi[...] Center Newslet[...]
Complete [...] this Issue

WOES OF AN
ARMY COOK
By [...] Wilson
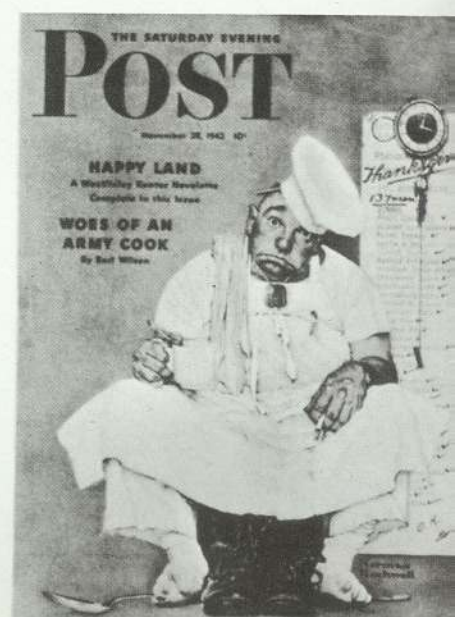
I remember how much I enjoyed painting these ha[nds] and feet. I tried to make them express just what [...]

...ace, neck, arms, hands and feet — everything must ...rive to express your idea.

...hat a small part of this picture the hands are but ...w important they are to the message I wished ...tell.

THANKSGIVING

These hands are obviously essential to the story. I tried to contrast the Cub Scout's younger and less skillful hands with the sunburned, skilled hands of the older Scout.

...rtainly the hands of the soldier are the most ...ry-telling part of this idea. Without them there ...no story.
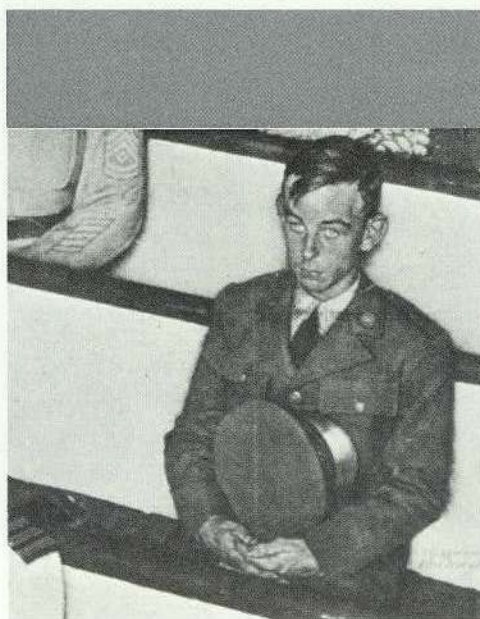
In the previous picture, the hands conveyed action and excitement but in this picture I tried to express repose and quiet.

Thanksgiving
norman rockwell

"Spare the model and spoil the picture." Along with the head and the hands, the figure and posture must help convey what you wish to tell. In planning a pose I usually make a match stick sketch like the one above to figure out how I can best express the action. Never spare the model, or yourself, in arriving at the best pose to tell your story. Now that we use photographs so often it is much easier on both the artist and the model. But even though we have the camera to help us today, you should try many sketches and many poses until you get what you need. As some great thinker said, "Genius is the ability to take infinite pains."

The importance of figure and posture

We have considered the importance of heads and of facial expression in telling a story. And I have cited some examples which I hope have demonstrated that hands are almost as important as heads in story-telling pictures, and that feet, arms, legs — the entire body, in fact — can be made to aid in conveying a message. And this brings up the importance of figure and of posture in pictures.

"Spare the model and spoil the picture," someone has observed. Along with the head and the hands, the figure and posture must help to convey what you wish to say. I consider posture so important that, in planning a pose, I usually make a "match stick" sketch like that shown with the early baseball player picture in order to figure out in advance how best to express the action.

Never spare the model — or yourself — in getting the

FATHER'S DAY

"Socks"
by
Interwoven

best pose to tell your story. Perhaps you will find, as I have found, that taking many photographs makes the task of finding the right pose much easier for you and your model. So try many sketches and many poses until you get what you need. Some great thinker has said, "Genius is the ability to take *infinite* pains."

Perhaps right here is the place to offer you an apology. As you continue these lessons and find me referring continually to my own pictures and pointing out what

I think are their good qualities, you will probably begin to wonder at my conceit. The only reason I am doing this is that I can more easily explain by citing my own examples. I know why I made a picture a certain way, but I may not understand why some other artist made his a certain way. Believe me, I know better than anyone else that none of my pictures are even near-masterpieces and I know that some of them distinctly "smell."

Here is a quiet, peaceful scene and I tried, with the aid of graceful lines in the figures, to give it the charm of past times. I did not want sharp, opposing lines and masses to give a feeling of conflict or action. This is important. Decide on the mood of the picture, then make every pose convey that mood and express that idea.

The attention of all of the figures is focused on the same emotion is expressed in four different ways. The squire has an air of relaxed dignity; the tavern keeper expresses admiring astonishment; the girl leans forward fascinated and the painter himself is entirely oblivious of his audience. Each member of the group is moved by the same impulse — concentration — but each expresses it in a different way.
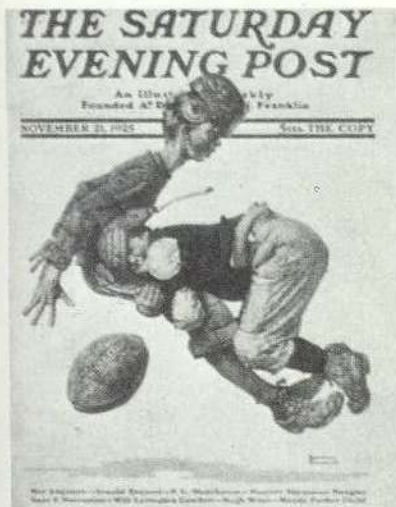
Here is an idea completely different from the two pictures on the opposite page. This is an irresistible force meeting an immovable object. Wham! Here I'm not trying for graceful lines but for straight lines and opposing angles.

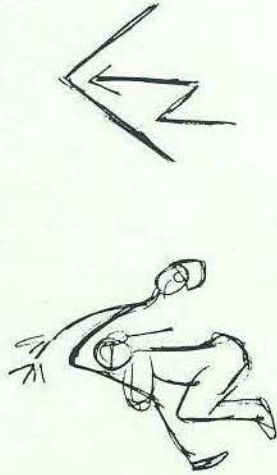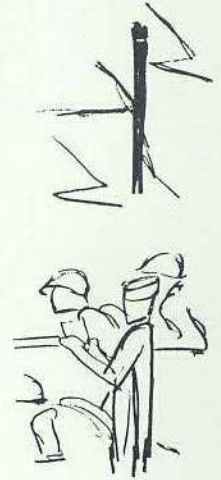In this war picture I used the old stunt of rigid straight figures set against moving, active figures. The straight figures make the moving figures more active and vice versa. This is an old, tried and true stunt but it is a good one.

Compare the postures of the figures in the above pictures with those of the figures on the opposite page. There is no peace and quiet here but exactly the opposite idea — conflict and action. In the football picture we gain the impression of an irresistible force meeting an immovable object — wham! Here I was not trying for graceful lines but for straight ones and for opposing angles as indicated in the "match stick" sketch.

In the war picture I used the old stunt of a rigid, straight figure set against moving and active figures. The straight, motionless figure makes the moving figures all the more active and vice versa. This is an old, tried and true trick — but still a good one.

The Yankee Doodle picture, reproduced here, is a case in point. It shows a lot of story-telling poses but it is a far cry from a masterpiece and I know it. In it, I tried for an endless variety of poses. There are figures standing, sitting, leaning, riding, running, pulling, pointing. I made this sketch before getting in any models. I tried to carry it as far as I could so I could make my models fit my conception of the picture instead of making my picture fit the poses struck by the models. I made some changes but for the most part the figures in the final painting were quite similar in their poses to those in this sketch.

If you find a pose you like, admire it but do not try to repeat it. Try for endless variety in poses. It is very bad if you allow yourself to follow a formula in poses. Howard Pyle, the great American illustrator, once advised his students to "climb through the frame and into the picture." In other words, become a part of your picture. Try to get inside your characters and feel how they would sit or walk or stand or run under the circumstances of the story. If you do this with every picture you ever make, your pictures will carry conviction and realism and you will not find yourself repeating or getting into a rut.

KEE DOODLE CAME TO TOWN · RIDING ON A PONY · STUCK A FEATHER IN HIS H

Here is one of the many studies I did in charcoal for the painting of Yankee Doodle above.
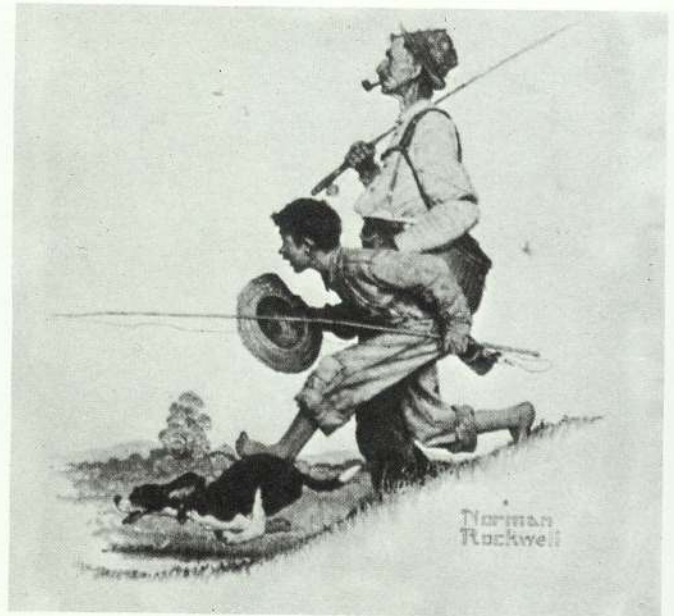
As I explained in the first lesson, calendars present a different problem than advertisements, illustrations or covers. Since they are intended to be lived with, to be hung on the wall for twelve months, the ideas must not be too new, strong or startling. So you must try to make up for this limitation by the use of color and action. Often such pictures are most effective if they show people doing things which the beholder or someone he knows might also do.

It is rather obvious that, whether you are doing a monthly calendar or one of the Four Seasons such as I do every year, each picture must be distinctive and different so that the month's or season's message is obvious. In my Four Seasons calendar pictures for 1948, shown here, I tried to make the poses of the people, as well as their action, symbolic of the season they represented.

The frosty pep of the winter scene is repeated in the poses and actions of the figures; the spring scene is one of life and promise and the figures carry out the same idea of languor and warmth; the qualities emphasized in the poses of the figures for summer and autumn show the quiet and reflective manner of these seasons. As I said, I tried

WINTER

For the winter subject, I just used the warm interior color of a room. I felt I could not make this scene too cold and wintry or it would repel the observer. I wanted the scene to be jolly and appealing.

to make the poses of the characters express the seasons in which they appeared. You can judge better than I how well I succeeded — or failed.

My 1948 calendar showed youth and age and a dog in each season. For 1949 I depicted a boy and a girl and a dog in seasonal activities. I do not think the 1949 pictures are as good as the 1948 ones, but that is the way things are. You try each time, but sometimes the pictures do not come off. A boy and his grandfather doing the same things at the same time of year had an appeal that a boy and a girl did not have.

One wonderful thing about making pictures, however, is that there is always the next time. You can try hard but when the picture is finished, it just isn't a "wow." Perhaps you don't know what is wrong but you promise yourself to do better, to try harder. You have great hopes for the next one. When you lose this feeling of hope and of interest, you are finished as an artist.

In the 1949 calendar set I tried hard for variety of poses both in the children and in the dog. I tried, too, to convey something of a feeling of the seasons by the poses. You can decide whether I succeeded. I was dissatisfied when I finished them.
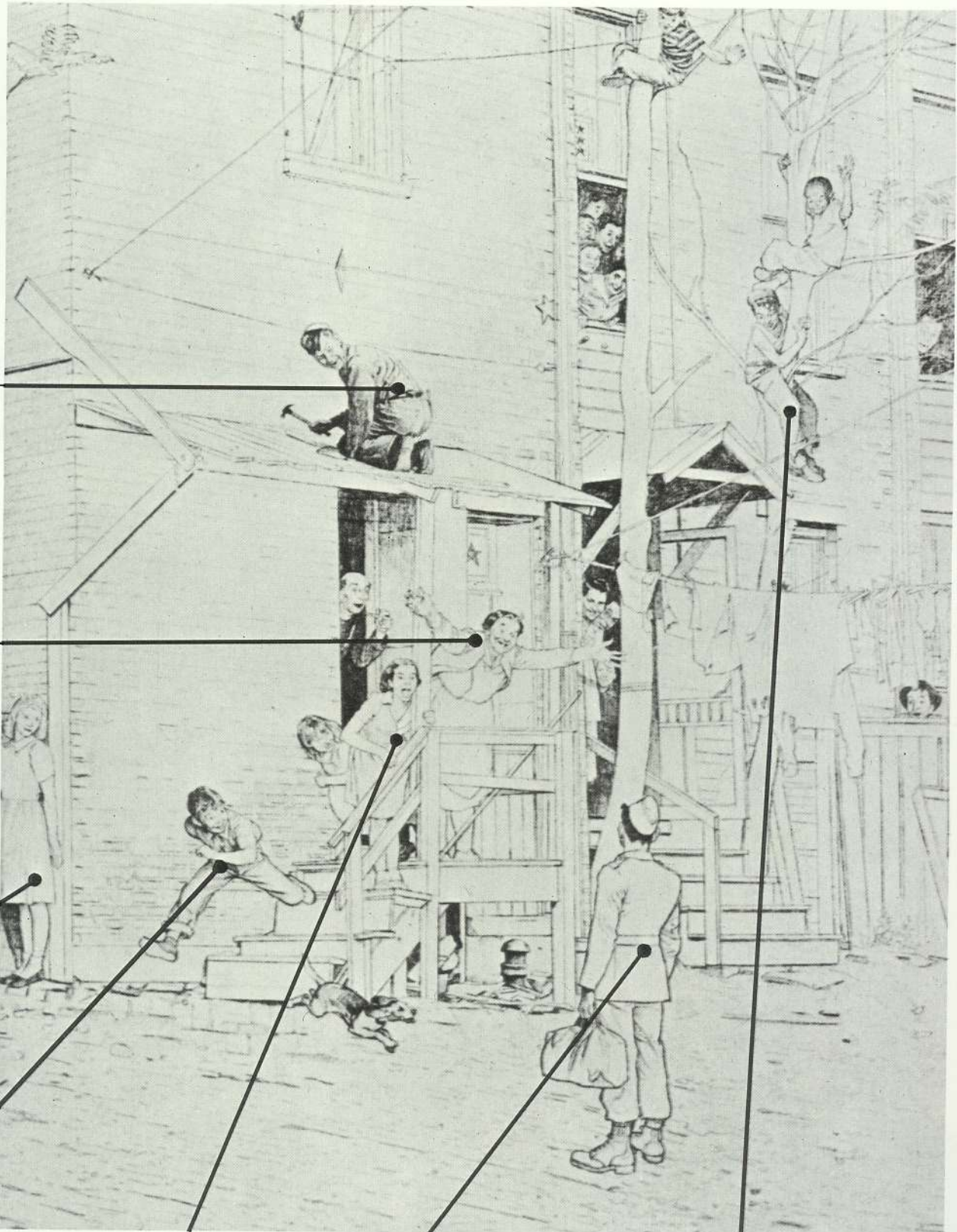
Pop's posture shows he is startled. The job was helped by turning his head and shoulders.

Mom's complete, all-out delight is shown by outstretched arms and her grin.

The girl friend's bashful pleasure is accentuated by straight lines.

—By permission Saturday Evening Post © 1945 Curtis Pub. Co.

Brother Willie's exhuberance is shown by his full run and showing him completely off the ground.

Sister Sadie's disregard for young ladylike behavior is indicated by her wide mouth.

The hero himself, with his back to you, is possibly conveying more with the back of his head than you could ever say by showing his face.

All the neighbors, whatever their creed or color, show their welcome according to their natural inclinations.
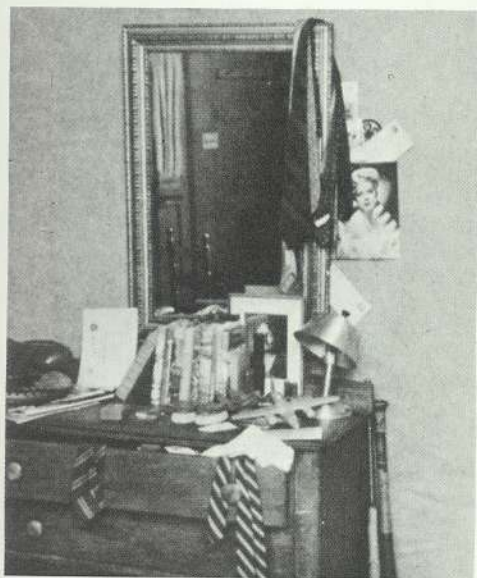
Next in importance are props. Remember, there should never be anything shown in a picture that does not contribute directly to the telling of the story. I say this knowing full well I have not always kept the rule. Nevertheless, every single object shown in a picture should contribute directly to the central theme. All other things should be ruthlessly discarded. I repeat this rule because it is one of the cardinal rules of good picture making.

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Proper props

A good picture is a combination of many things — including props. Next in importance to proper posture are proper props for a picture. In my opinion, nothing should ever be shown in a picture which does not contribute directly to telling the story the picture is intended to tell. I say this knowing full well that many fine artists will disagree with me. Nevertheless, I am convinced and I maintain that every single object shown in a picture should have its place there because it contributes to the central theme of the picture. Otherwise, it simply does not belong and should be discarded ruthlessly. I have reiterated this because I feel that it is one of the cardinal rules of good picture-making.

BEGINNING **SAILOR TAKE WARNING** By RICHARD SALE
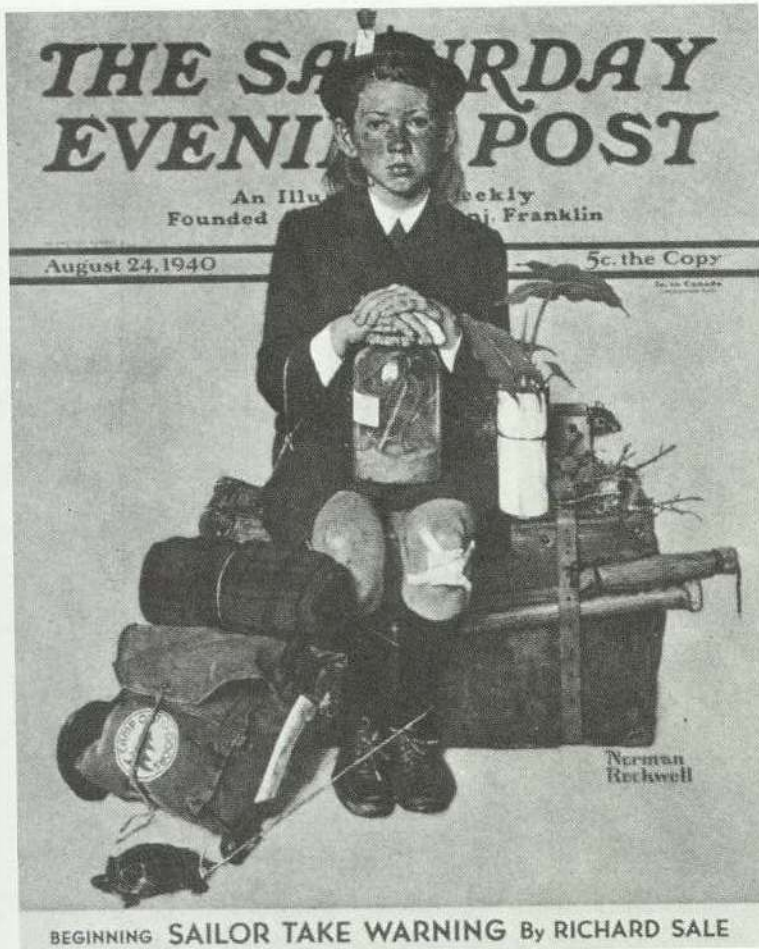
—By permission Saturday Evening Post © 1940 Curtis Pub. Co.
Common, everyday objects compose the props in this picture. Perhaps there are
too many of them but they all help tell the story of the little girl getting home
from camp. This picture gave me the idea for an April Fool cover containing
dozens of props — all of them wrong.

—By permission Saturday Evening Post © 1940 Curtis Pub. Co.
Historical props are used in this picture to fix the time of the story. Even a very
minor prop can get me into trouble — in this case the walking beam of the
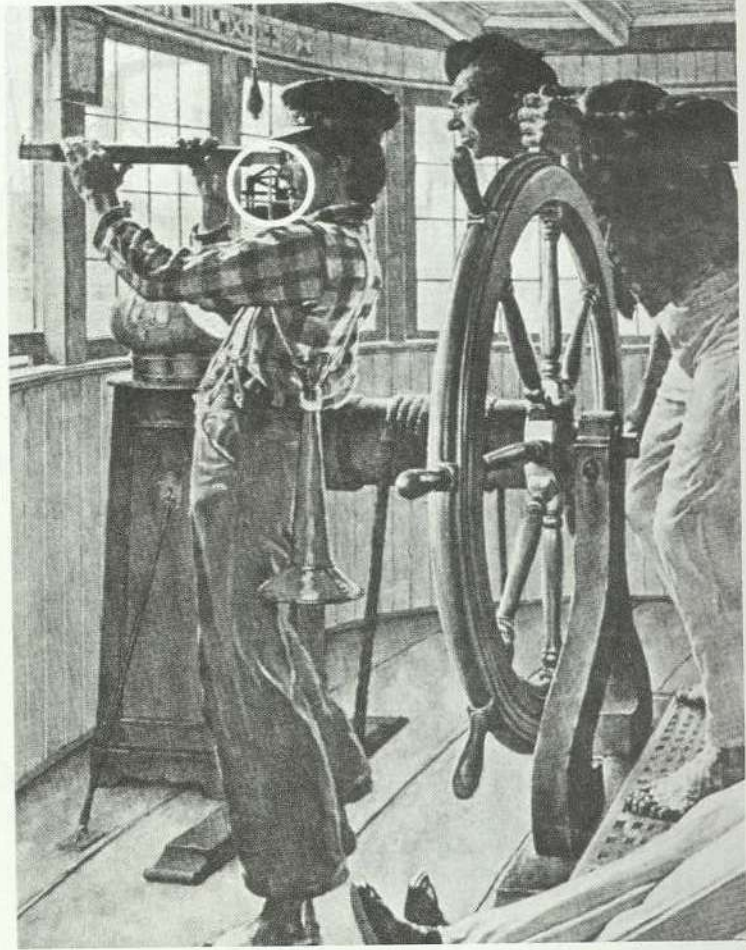ship in the background, shown in circle. Some people said ships of this period
and type were not thus equipped.

The pictures above demonstrate the use of two types
of props, the contemporary, everyday type and the his-
torical or scientific type. You can find props like those
used with the girl returning from camp everywhere
around you. Obtaining them is not much of a problem.
But the second kind you must dig for and do research
in libraries and museums to find.

In the picture of the girl, the props contribute hum-
orously or in some other manner to the telling of the
story. In the second picture the props lend authenticity
to the illustration and disclose the approximate time
the story took place. You cannot be too careful about
your selection of props, especially historical or scientific
ones, because people love to catch you making mistakes.
People seldom criticize the subject or the characters but
it's different with props. With them, people have a
wonderful time at the expense of the artist when a mis-
take is made.

Frequently I receive letters from people stating they
have liked my pictures for years — but at last they've
got me because I have used a wrong prop. Note that
they do not write to me just to say they like my pictures.
That is merely by way of getting started. What they
really want to tell me is that they have found something
wrong with one of the props.

Finally I got my revenge in this April Fool cover.
I tried deliberately to make all of the props wrong, to
fill one cover chock full of mistakes. I thought I had 45
errors in this cover, mistakes for people to search for
and detect. But I had a letter from South America in
which the writer said he had found nearly 200. Maybe
he was right and there *were* about 150 errors that I
didn't know about. I have never yet done a cover in
which someone has not found something wrong with a
prop or two. I think this proves how important props
are and the things you can do with props — besides
using the wrong ones.

People who like to find fault with props settled down to take pen in hand when they first saw this picture. They wrote anyhow — by the hundreds — but only to find out whether they had missed any of the mistakes.

The photographs on this page show some of the props used in making the picture shown at the right. Getting them all together and arranging them on the model presented quite a problem.

Here is a picture that is practically made of props. There are too many if you ask me!

Research and props

There's nothing like going to the scene you are going to illustrate for your research and your props if you can. One of my most interesting research jobs was in connection with illustrating *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. I went to Hannibal, Missouri, the scene of the stories, for this purpose. I was very much afraid, before I went, that I would find no trace left of Mark Twain. But I was very pleasantly surprised. Everything he wrote about in his two wonderful books was there — his house, the river, the cave — every detail just as he told about them.

The background in the accompanying illustration, showing Aunt Polly giving Tom Sawyer his medicine, is really authentic because it is Aunt Polly's living room just as it is still preserved.

Mark Twain related how Tom climbed out of his bedroom window at night, set his foot on a drain pipe, jumped across to the woodshed roof and from there, dropped to the ground. I was able to show the exact window, the very drainpipe and the woodshed just as the author had described them. Research like this is very pleasant and rewarding.

Tom and Huck have been illustrated many times before but no other illustrator, as far as I know, has ever bothered to go to Hannibal. I think I can prove this by the fact that every other illustration I have ever seen depicting the scene in the cave presents the rock strata as perpendicular whereas it is actually horizontal.

Research is interesting, important and worth all the trouble it involves. Not only checking on details but visiting the scene of your picture is worth-while. When you go to the place and see the scene with your own eyes, you get the "feel" and the "smell" of the picture, the locale and the mood of the story. Research is educational for an illustrator and adds immeasurably to the enjoyment of picture making. And research need not be dull. It is very thrilling and inspiring when you have done a real job and you see the results of it in your picture.
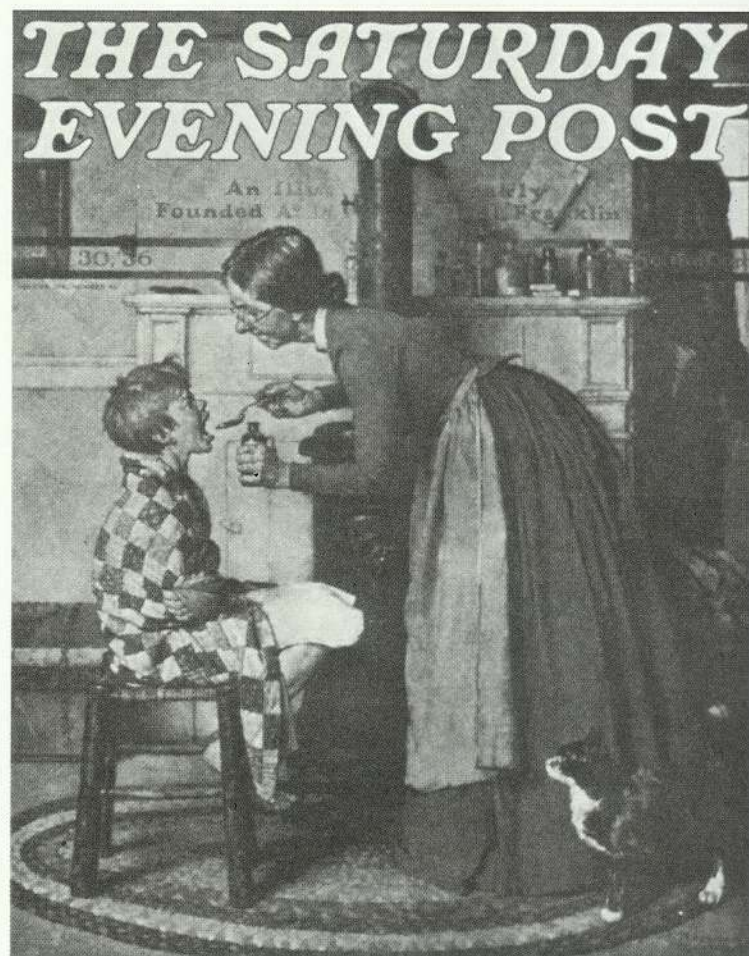
ALVA JOHNSTON · PAUL GALLICO · BOOTH TARKINGTON

—By permission Saturday Evening Post © 1936 Curtis Pub. Co.

The neckerchief must be exactly the right color and tied absolutely according to the regulations.

The insignia and gadgets on the pockets and shoulder must be correct and clearly seen.

The uniform must fit just so and the length of the sleeves and shorts must be correct. The hat must be new and right in every detail.

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They do not worry so much about historical research. It is the equipment they bear down on.

From an old contemporary photo I saw that Lincoln wore an old double-breasted frock coat and a gold watch chain.

I found that Lincoln had his Gettysburg address written on two scraps of crumpled paper.

The other characters on the stand are all well known historical persons and I got their likenesses from old prints.

By research, I found it was late in the afternoon when Lincoln delivered his speech as the preceding speaker had delivered a long drawn out one. Lincoln's immortal speech took just two minutes.

I encountered an extreme example of the need for absolutely correct props in making pictures for the Boy Scout calendars, one of which is reproduced here. The Boy Scouts are sticklers for details, even the smallest ones. After I finish a Boy Scout painting, they bring in their technical experts and go over everything with the finest of fine-tooth combs. Anything that is not exactly right and proper must be fixed. It's a little discouraging but I try to be philosophical about it. You, in your own art career, will have assignments where minute details will be important and where careful and meticulous research must precede any drawing, so this is just one example of how important details

I did a lot of research before painting this picture and I really enjoyed making it because Lincoln is my hero of heroes. You learn a great deal about history from the research you must do for a historical picture such as this. Some of what you learn is important, some is unimportant, but all of it is interesting. Some of the facts I uncovered are pointed out in the picture captions. I was in Hollywood when I painted this picture, so I was able to get, for a model, an actor who specialized in Lincoln portrayals. He knew from his own research how Lincoln stood and acted and this helped me a lot in making the painting.

Poses and Props

Posing and Photographing the Model

Your finished picture will be no better than the model you use, and it will be no better than the acting of which your model is capable. When you have found the best model to portray a character in your picture, your next problem is to get your model to act. A model who won't or can't act the character's role is useless to you. In such a case, don't waste time — get another model. I wanted the model in the photograph to act the part of the screaming baseball fan who appears in the upper left part of the picture on the right. When this photograph was taken, she was too self-conscious and I am doing my best to coax her to cut loose. She finally did.
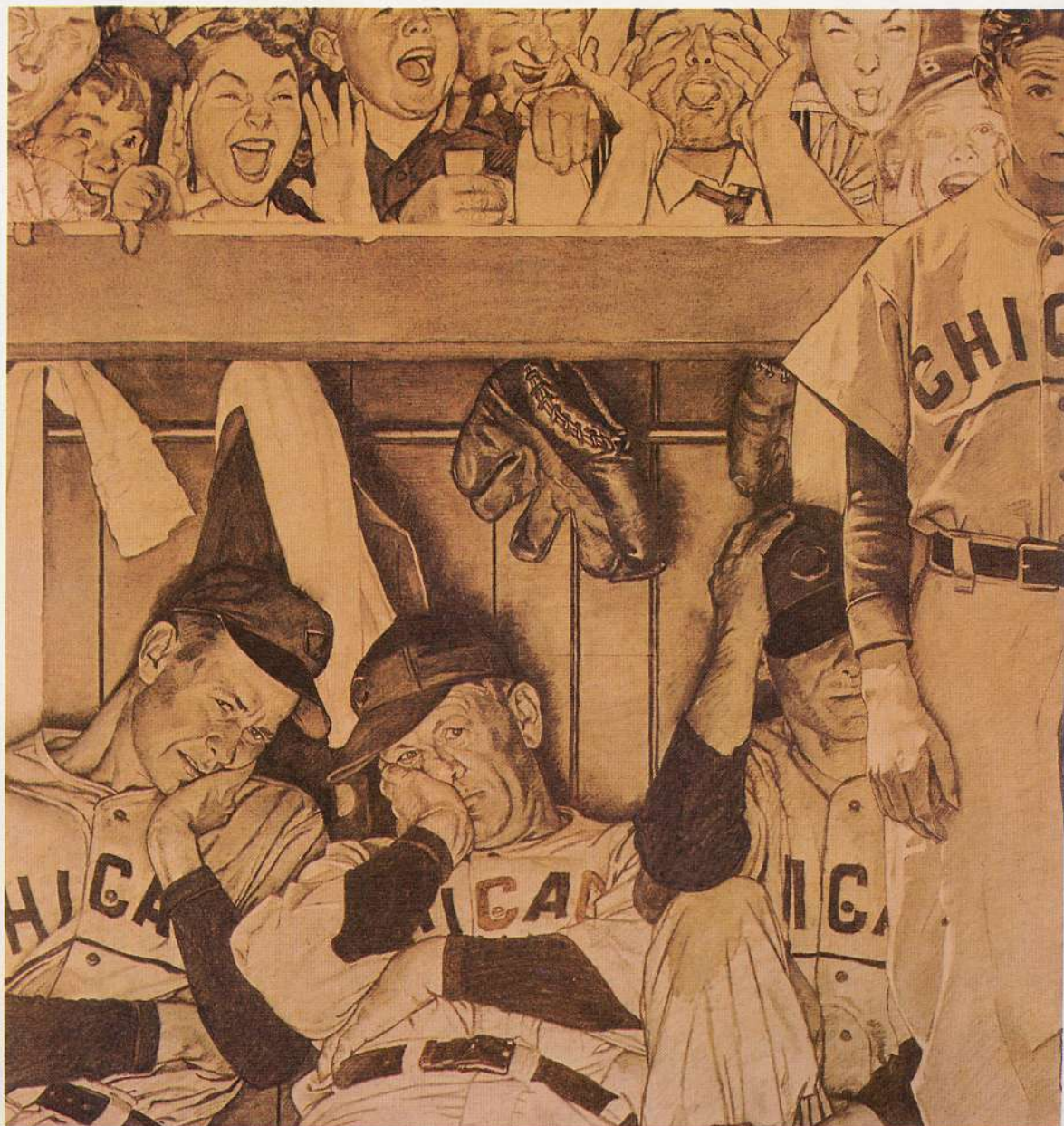
I still make a painting once in a while without the help of photographs but 90 per cent of my work is done with the aid of the camera. There are still a few — a very few — illustrators who frown on the use of photographs, but their numbers are decreasing.

Whether you choose to use photographs or not is certainly up to you. Whatever your decision, the contents of this lesson will apply because what I have to offer about posing and *photographing* a model is equally true in posing and *drawing* from the model. We will not consider the technical aspects of photography in discussing posing and photographing models because I assume that you are able to take, print and develop your own photographs or can have them made for you, which is what I do.

Acting and directing

Directing models so you can get the right poses for your pictures is an art in itself and is somewhat akin to the motion picture director's job. First, you must discard all your own dignity and vanity and "get into the act" yourself in order to induce your model to lay aside his own dignity so he will feel and express the emotion which you want to convey in your picture.

This is not always easy, either for you or the model, and once in a while you will find a model who looks the part but who just cannot lay aside his own individuality and act like someone else. He just can't break down and act. Thank him for trying and look for someone else. What you need is an actor.

Before a model even attempts to pose for me, I tell him the story I want my picture to tell because I want him to understand what I am trying to do, what I am trying to convey. Then I get into the pose myself and show him how I think it should be done. This indicates that I am willing to get into the part and make a fool of myself if necessary. The model usually loosens up about this time and begins to get into the spirit of the thing.

Next I suggest that he try the pose. Usually he doesn't get it the first time because he probably is not a pro-

fessional actor and he is still self conscious. But we keep at it and, if my model has a bit of the ham in him, he eventually loses all self consciousness and begins to act the part with real feeling and enthusiasm. It is when he reaches this stage that I believe a good photograph is better than trying to draw from the model because he cannot maintain this feeling and this enthusiasm indefinitely, once he has attained it, but a photograph will.

As I have said, I do not take my own photographs but I have instructed my photographer to have his camera ready and focused. So when the model hits the "peak" in expressing the idea, I signal the photographer to shoot. He snaps not just one picture but perhaps ten so that I will have a choice of expressions from which to choose. If I were drawing from the

I will tell jokes, cry or shout at the top of my lungs to get a model to loosen up and "give her all" when posing. Here I am "giving my all."

If I expect a model to sneeze for me, I've got to be able to sneeze, too. Here I am doing my very best to deserve a "Gesundheit."

I never ask a model to do anything I wouldn't do, even though it may involve climbing into a period costume and posing with a horse's skull. Actually, I wanted to record the size of a horse's skull in relation to a man's figure.

You can't explain to a model how to look terrified but you can show him how to look scared — if you have as much ham in you as I have.

model, he would be compelled, somehow or other, to try to hold that peak expression for hours and I would have no choice of expressions.

Therefore, I feel that I get more spontaneous expressions and a wider choice of expressions with the assistance of the camera and I save a lot of wear and tear on myself and on the model. On the other hand, I must admit that there is a certain quality of aliveness and sympathy which is lessened when you do not work directly from the model. So take your choice.

Sometimes I compromise between the use of photographs and drawing from the model by having photographs made, then calling the model back again and painting or drawing from the model after reference to the photographs. This seems to be one way to eat your cake and have it too. But whatever method you choose, one thing is essential. You must get in there and feel and live and act what you want to say yourself so you can coax the model to "give his all"!

When I am working to stimulate a model I stop at nothing. I wisecrack to make him laugh if that's the expression I want, or I almost weep to make him feel sad if that is required, and I shout my lungs out to excite him if necessary — anything and everthing to make him react and act. Last but not least, I always pay a model even if he is a bank president or one of my own children. Even if the fee is small, it makes the model feel a certain responsibility whereas if I did not pay him, he might feel that he was just doing me a favor and would not be inclined to go "all out."

Go to the location

When you have decided what the background of your picture is to be, follow just one rule and make no exceptions. Go to the real thing — the actual background. Don't try to fake your background or dream one up or use some picture from a magazine as a substitute for the real thing. Go and find the best possible location embodying the background you have chosen and make sketches and take photographs of it, whether it is an early American kitchen or the inside of a submarine. When you go to the location yourself, you will get the "feel" and "smell" of the background which will in a great measure set the mood of your picture.

You will be surprised to find that if you are sincere and considerate, people will let you in almost anywhere as soon as you explain your mission. I spent two days at the White House taking photographs and making sketches and I have made many pictures in farmers' homes. In each case, the people were hospitable and helpful because I made them understand that I had an honest job to do and that I would do nothing to embarrass or bother them that was not necessary in doing my job.

I believe that if you can make people understand this, they will always cooperate with you. The authenticity of the real thing is something which everyone who sees your picture recognizes instantly and instinctively, even if they never have seen the place. So the real thing is worth any amount of effort to get.

There is one distinct advantage of going to the location of your picture which it is difficult to overestimate. The real background suggests things which you could only imagine, which would never occur to you at all in the studio. Frequently these are only little things but it is these little things which add the touch of authenticity to your picture. So go to the location — always — if you can.

Authentic backgrounds are important and people will cooperate if you explain your problem. These are some I have used. The top one is of the Wedgewood Room of the Waldorf-Astoria in New York. The middle one is a tenement back yard in Troy, New York and the bottom picture is a farm yard I finally located near Portland, Indiana.

A lot of people went to a lot of trouble to make this Hollywood shot for me and I appreciated it — but I didn't use the picture. It was just too darned complicated. I am in the foreground with my back to the camera.

Here is a much simpler and less costly shot but I got what I wanted. This was for an outdoor picture. Don't try to simulate outdoor light. Use the real thing. I am holding a white cloth to give some light to the shadow side.
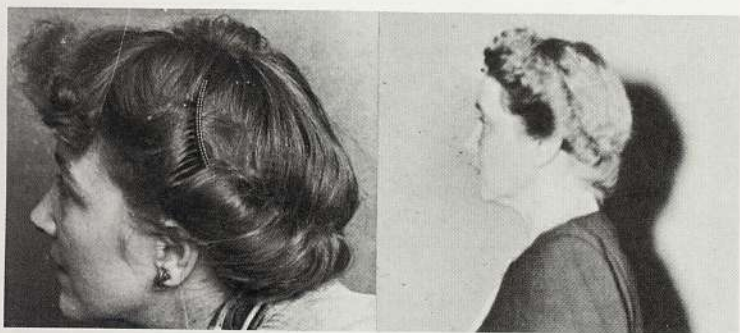
On the left is the lighting I love, from the good old studio North window. Give me a choice and this is what I'll take every time. At the right is a flash bulb job. It flattens out the lighting and leaves very little modeling. I never use "flashes" unless I have to.
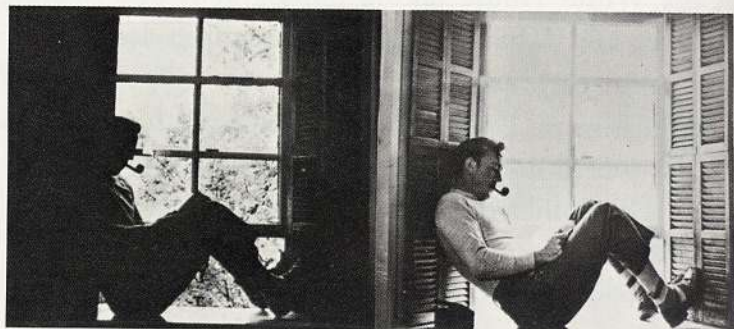
This illustrates a stunt which you may already know about. Both photographs were taken under the same conditions except that in one I used a very soft flood light to lighten up the shadow side. Always be careful that the flood light does not cast shadows of its own because they will complicate the lighting too much.

Correct lighting is important — and the simpler the better

Very often you can create the mood of a picture by the lighting you use. For example, if you are illustrating a story that tells of horror, you can instantly give the reader a feeling of starkness and cruelty by lighting it directly from above with a cold, hard light. But if your picture is to show an old couple seated in their doorway in peace and contentment, you can give the scene a mood of benevolent sunset and peace by lighting it horizontally.

Sometimes, unfortunately, you must use flash bulbs for your lighting in making your photographs. These I hate. The lighting which I love to paint most of all is just plain everyday light from my large, studio North window. It is natural and uncomplicated and it is the light which all great masters of art have used. There are enough large light areas and enough shadow to give all of the detail and character which the sitter has.

Hollywood lighting I dislike violently. They use flood lights and side lights and back lights and, when they have finished, perhaps they have removed all of the wrinkles and shadows, but they have removed the character too. Of course, different subjects, by their different character and varied nature, require different lighting but as for me, give me good old studio North light whenever I can get it.
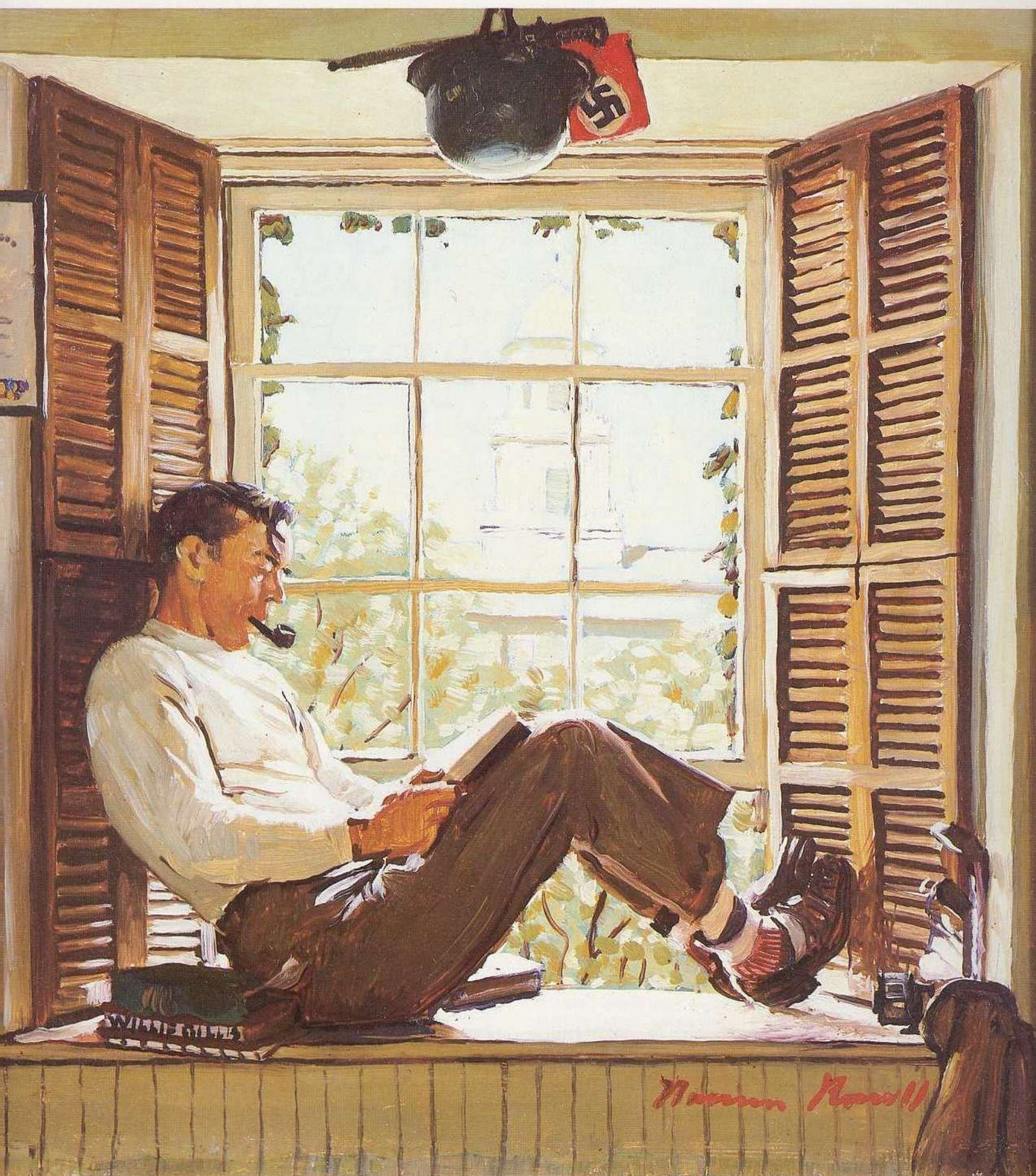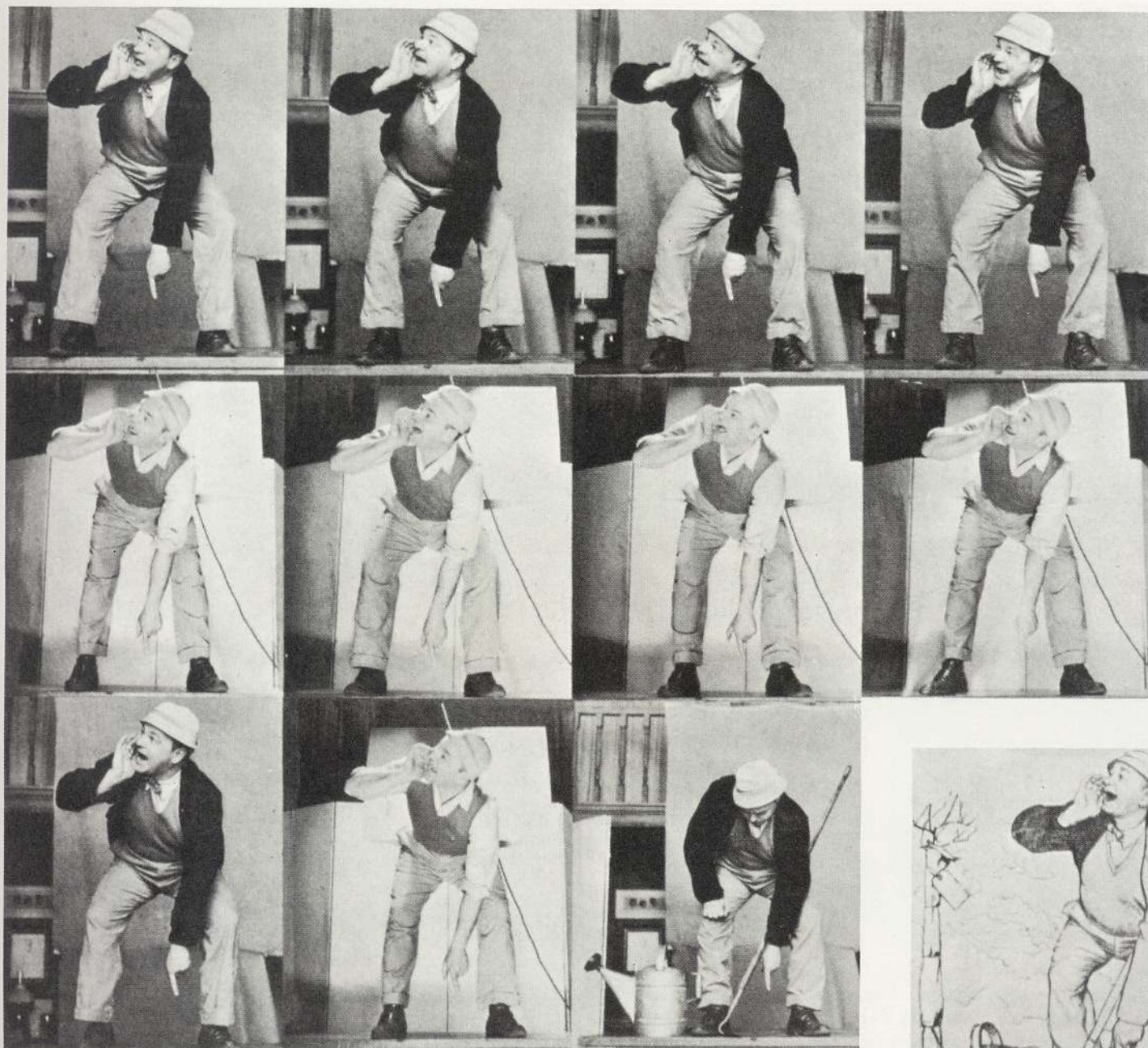
Take plenty of photographs

Never stint on photographs if you are going to work from them. Take *plenty*. This is one of the great advantages of using photographs — you can have innumerable poses from which to choose. So take full advantage of this and never economize in the studio. If you must economize, be stingy with your wife, your clothes, your food, but never on what will make your work better. This may sound almost immoral but in the end if you make better pictures you will make more money and then you can enjoy the food and the clothes and buy your wife a mink coat.

I am citing just one example of how I am profligate with photographs because I think it pays. Reproduced on this page is a drawing for a magazine cover and some of the photographs of poses which I had made and which I had to choose from in making the illustration. I have not shown you all of them. There were a dozen others despite the fact that this was a simple job. I take about fifty photographs for most jobs.

I do not work from any single photograph exclusively but select parts from several poses, so my picture which results from the photographs is a composite of many of them . There are, for example, a lot of ways of saying, "Hey, look, it's up!" as my model here proves. It is always better to have too many poses than too few, so when in doubt always take a few more.

Some practical shortcuts

I find it very practical and useful to take many seasonal background photographs whenever they are available. Waiting for trees and plants to bloom is a tedious business so I photograph them during the summer. Then I have them in the winter when I am likely to be painting summer scenes. Or when there is a beautiful snowfall, I hustle out and get background shots which I know I will use later.

I have very poor success finding the background shots I want among the pictures and photographs of other people. There are certain subjects and angles that I happen to like and which are typical of my work, so when I select and take the shots myself, I usually get scenes which I know will be useful. Another reason for doing this is that if I have viewed and known the scene myself, I can paint it with much more conviction and understanding than if it were a photograph of something which I had never seen with my own eyes.

There are many other tricks and practical shortcuts in posing models which I will explain later and there will be still others which you will develop for yourself. It is difficult enough to make pictures anyhow, so feel free to use all the aids or helps you can get as long as they improve your product and do not tend to cheapen it. Other illustrators often tell me of simpler ways to do things and I can assure you that I am always grateful. That is a wonderful trait of illustrators — they all, without exception, impart to their fellows the new and practical techniques which they discover themselves.

Frequently you must take several shots and combine them in order to get a simple figure or a couple of figures. These problems are always a challenge to your ingenuity and the solution of them can be lots of fun because some of the results appear almost incongruous by themselves. But they all go to make a picture. Here are some examples from my own experience.

Animals frequently pose a problem and this bear certainly did. I wanted to show the bear trainer fanning the bear but the bear wouldn't cooperate so I "stood in" for him. Then we took the photograph of the unwilling bear. A few minutes later he went berserk and I went through a French window to safety.
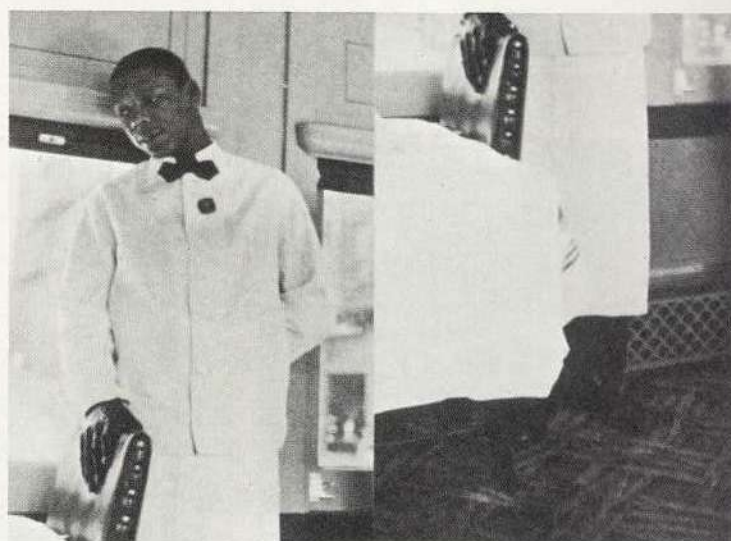
These two photographs of the dining car waiter were taken in a dining car but the car was too narrow to get a full-length view. So we had to take an "upper" and a "lower" and I combined them to make a whole waiter.

Make friends of your models

I cannot overemphasize how important it is to maintain a good relationship with your models. When I was in the Navy in World War I, two officers had authority to give me orders — and both of them did. One of them I obeyed only because I had to, and grudgingly. Everyone liked the other officer and gladly did whatever he suggested because they respected and trusted him. We knew he would not ask us to do anything unless it was necessary and had a real purpose.

I think of this officer when dealing with models and try to create the fine relationship with my models that the officer had with his men. If your models feel that you are their friend rather than their boss and if you can make them feel that they are very important to the success of your picture, they invariably will cooperate. The accompanying photographs show models of mine in various poses. These poses are not only difficult but it was necessary for each model to understand the picture before he could express the idea. You cannot get people to do things like this for you, no matter how much you pay them or order them about, unless they like and trust you.

This model was a dignified banker who was past seventy when he posed for this photograph. What I paid him for posing was unimportant to him but he did his best, and wholeheartedly, because he was interested in my picture.

This boy's name is Billy Brown and I have used him frequently as a model. He understands what I want and, unlike the banker, he loves the money I pay him for doing it. But most of all he knows I like him and need his help.
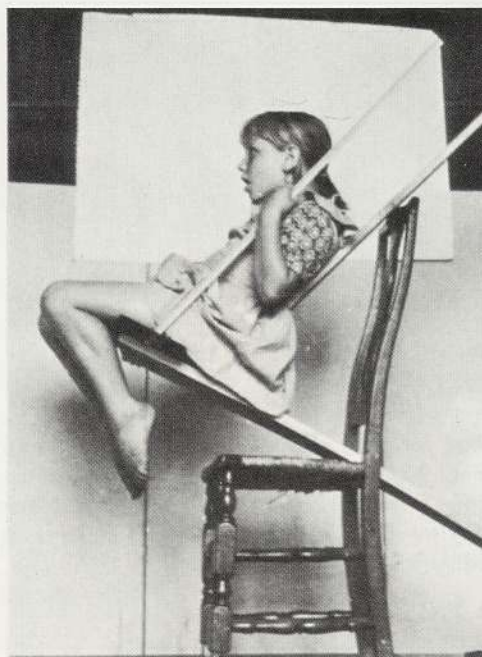
This little girl was timid about taking this pose, so I posed first to prove to her that the supports would hold. I thought I had convinced her but you will notice her right hand firmly grips the seat of the makeshift swing.

I had taken seven other photographs of this boy's facial expression and made this one just to get the hand. You must be persistent but patient. If a model feels you are impatient or too demanding, the jig is up.

For the summer picture I used the effect of strong sunlight. In fact, after the picture was painted, I glazed it with a warm yellow to emphasize the effect of a hot summer day.

This oldster is having fun cutting capers on ice but it was no fun for the elderly man who modeled for me because this is a difficult action pose. Obviously using photographs is an advantage in cases like this. Before I used photographs it was up to me and the model to do the best we could and suffer — and suffer we did. Imagine an elderly person striking a pose like this and trying to hold it for a protracted period. Mr. Crofut, who posed for the picture, was past seventy-five and no longer possessed the suppleness of youth. Even turning his head as in the photograph here was a real effort for him and would have been impossible for a long pose. He was eager and willing to try, but he just could not have held such a pose long enough for me to paint it. Once I had the pose photographed, he could relax and I could look at the same pose for a week if I wished without tiring Mr. Crofut in the least.

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Mr. Crofut and I are not dancing and the embrace is purely platonic. A neighbor helped by holding up Mr. Crofut's foot in the desired position for a photograph while I supported my model. I am always very cautious and careful about older people. They are so willing and cooperative but they are likely to be "brittle" and need careful handling.

Getting the arm and leg action was not too difficult but I had to restrain Mr. Crofut a bit while the photographs were being made because he was so eager to help me get what I wanted that I feared he would exert himself too much. It always is a delight to work with models like Mr. Crofut who get right into the act — and really act.

It required several more pictures than I have shown here to get this single action on film — and it requires all your skill, knowledge and experience to bring all the separate parts of the action together into one picture so the picture is convincing. The main thing is to have the desired action clearly in mind or in a sketch before you take any pictures.

Mrs. O'Leary's cow — the one that burned Chicago down — presented a special problem. Here I had to take several photographs of different parts of the cow in action and combine them into one picture. The cow was a lot more cooperative than the bear shown previously, especially when coaxed to pose in a natural position, but getting the different parts of the figure in motion took quite a lot of doing. My neighbor's boy, Jim Edgerton who owned the cow, helped raise the leg which represented the one that kicked over a lamp that burned down a city. I needed to know how a cow's leg looked when kicking and this tame one wouldn't kick. Also, we tried to coax Bossy to turn her head and look at the birdie but she wasn't curious so again the boy helped by swinging her head around to the camera. Otherwise Bossy was a cooperative model and a very good actress.
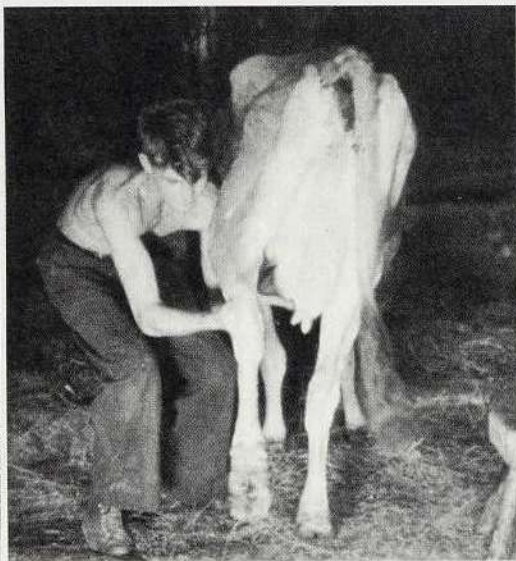
This branch of an apple tree which I am holding was photographed several years ago and since then has appeared in three pictures which I have painted. I used it in one of the "Four Seasons" calendars, then I used it on a Post cover of a sailor in a hammock, and finally I used it again in a double page spread for the Post about the county agricultural agent.

Always have someone pose in a background shot such as this, if you can, so that, long afterward, you can use the human figure as a yardstick in calculating the size of the objects in your background shot. This is much more important than it sounds and you will find it very helpful if you do it and sometimes very awkward if you forget to do it.

In taking action pictures like this, it is easier for me to call in a photographer than to try to take them myself. He can do all the technical work while I concentrate on the pose of the model. The background screen here is a neutral gray. I also have a white and a black one. They are light in weight, easy to move about and are a great help in taking photographs.

Here is another use for one of those screens, which come in handy every time photographs are made in the studio. The screen, propped up to support the boy, may not look like the slant of a hill to you, but that is what it turned out to be. This screen is dark on one side and light on the other, so it serves a dual purpose — besides being a hill.

A short-short story in a picture

This *Post* cover offered some unusual problems and it was a lot of fun and a test of my ingenuity. I wanted to show a middle-aged salesman on a hot August day, reverting to his boyhood by discarding his pretensions and conventions — and loving it.

I love to do a picture which shows a progression of action, a sequence of ideas at a glance. This picture says the salesman was hot and tired. He was driving between towns and came to a cool, appealing little stream. Then he had an idea! He stopped, looked about carefully, then stifled his conventional fears and qualms, sneaked down out of sight of the road and undressed. He hung up his clothes neatly, laid out his towel and took off his glasses. But his feet were tender so he wore his shoes to the water's edge. There he removed his shoes and socks and last, but not least, placed his cigar where he could reclaim it as soon as he emerged from his cool plunge.

This was a very fine opportunity for human interest story telling because I had a chance to live through each step of this episode with my subject and make the reader live through it and feel it with me.

I looked over at least fifteen Vermont bridges until I found this one which seemed to me to be just right for my picture. I am holding the coat about where the salesman hung his because I wanted to get the comparative size of the coat and the wall.

These were the model's clothes and this photograph was taken in the studio. I wanted to show that the man who suddenly had decided to go for a swim was a very precise and orderly person, hence the conservative hat and bow tie.

George Zimmer, my model for the swimming picture, was an awful good sport. He stripped and I poured several buckets of water over his head to get the effect. The mirror he is holding was intended to show his reflection but this didn't work.
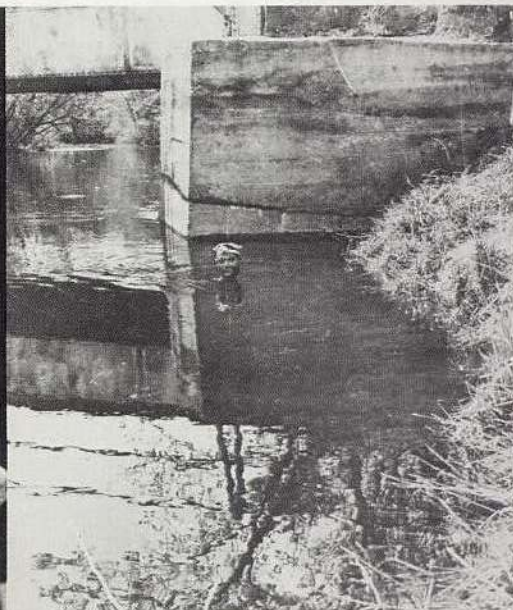
Because the mirror didn't work, I attached a fish hook to the head of a manikin and, with the aid of a fishing rod, dunked it up and down in the water, then took this photograph to get the effect of the reflection and ripples.

—By permission Saturday Evening Post © 1945 Curtis Pub. Co.

Make your pictures realistic

This cover was one of the most popular and successful I ever painted and I will explain why because I feel that by analyzing it I can help you to understand what the public likes and what you, as a human interest painter, should try to achieve.

First, the cover was timely because at the time it was published service men were returning and the idea was foremost in the minds and hearts of everyone. Timeliness is a great asset in any cover or picture.

Second, all the people in this picture are people I

knew and liked, so I loved to paint them. Each one is painted doing just what I had seen him doing for a living and the two boys are my sons. Therefore I painted each character with care and affection and with realism.

Third, this scene was a real and familiar one to me. It is Bob Benedict's garage in Arlington, Vermont, where I live. I had been there many times and knew it well, so I painted the garage just as it really was. People in general are familiar with this sort of setting and recognize a spurious or an authentic one. Therefore, in painting a real garage realistically, I was talking a language all could understand because it was about a subject with which all were familiar. This is not always possible, but when it can be done the result bears the stamp of conviction. If I had faked a garage and posed professional models, I could not possibly have made my picture as convincing, as real or as appealing.

Fourth, this was another chance to tell a sequence story, the kind I mentioned in the case of the salesman who had gone swimming. The young Marine worked in this garage before he went to war as shown by his workcoat with his name on it hanging beside his pic-

ture which the garage man has put up proudly along with his service flag. His service ribbons tell where he has been and now he has returned home to his friends and his old job. This is what is meant by a sequence picture — there is only one picture but it shows a sequence of events leading to a conclusion.

The photographs are some of the many I took in assembling all the facts for the garage picture. The photographs show most of the characters and most of the objects which appear in the picture. I hope you do not get the impression that I believe my picture was a masterpiece. I do not. But I know it is better than a lot of other pictures which I now know I loused up because I tried to fake the setting and put people in settings and in poses where they did not belong. I can even cite a horrible example. It was a Christmas cover and it was terrible. Why? Because I got a girl to pose as a salesgirl who was not a salesgirl and I faked the background of a store. Neither the store nor the girl looked right. The picture just did not ring true. This garage picture is no masterpiece but it is a lot better than my sad Christmas cover because it bears the stamp of authenticity.

The garage scene is an example where the setting and the characters were right at hand. But you can't always have these things just the way you would like them. Then you have to improvise which I certainly had to do in the case of this Statue of Liberty cover, as you can see by looking at the photographs took for this picture. In such cases I do my best to make the picture, as a whole, convincing but a picture like this, nevertheless lacks the authentic ring of the garage picture.

I feel that I made a mistake in taking the photographs for this cover. It would have been much better if I had posed the boy on the actual springboard instead of posing him in my studio as I did. You just can't simulate the effect of real sunlight — or at least I can't.
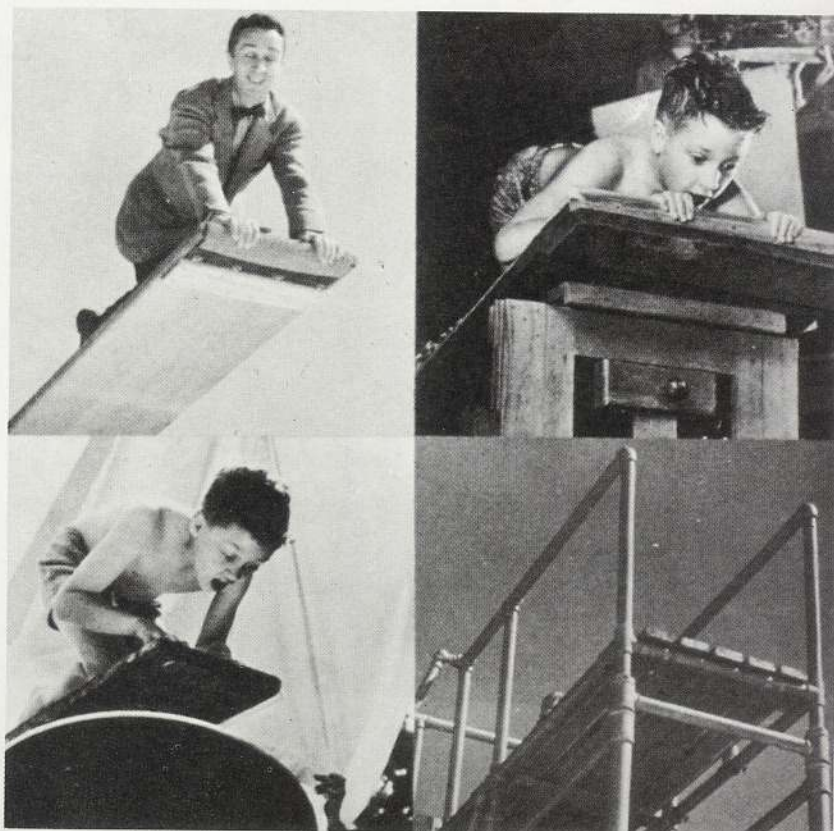
HIGH DIVE
20 FEET

If a dog or cat simply will not relax or put its head down for a photograph, press down gently but firmly at the base of the skull for a few moments. This does not hurt the animal but soon it will quit resisting and will relax and hold the pose. Then jerk your hand back and signal the photographer to shoot.

Photographing animals

Animals are often the center of interest in story telling pictures and at other times they can be included naturally in a picture. In such cases, they are very appealing and helpful. Frequently I receive letters from people who remark about the dog or cat which I have put in a picture but completely ignore the people I have shown with the animals.

Years ago I discovered how appealing the "dog-and-boy" picture can be and I turned out so many of them that my illustrator friends began ribbing me about it so I quit. It was high time too because I believe people were getting tired of the same old theme. So don't over-dig a gold mine when you find one. You may fall in the hole and it will become your artistic grave. However, if an animal fits naturally in a picture, put it in — but remember to paint it just as carefully and understandingly as you paint the people.

Never, under any circumstances, show cruelty suffering inflicted on an animal. Years ago a magazine printed a picture showing a farmer thawing out pump by pouring hot water in it. Some of the water had spilled on the farmer's dog which was shown running away. The picture was so unpopular that the editors did not even use any other picture by the same artist for several years. The public was very upset and so was the magazine.

Obtaining good photographs of animals for use in pictures is quite a test of your photography or, in my case, my photographer. It takes much kindness and patience to handle animal models but the effort is worthwhile because they are often important elements in story telling pictures. The person taking the photographs must be extremely quick and ingenious because an animal may assume the pose you want for only a split second and you must be ready to snap the photograph at that unpredictable moment.

I hold the animal where I hope he will assume the desired pose and my photographer focuses on him. Then I try to induce the model to take the desired pose. When he does I yell at the photographer to shoot. Sometimes the result is a blurred picture but other times I am lucky. Handle your animal models with kindness and never become impatient with them when taking photographs.

I do not like to see an appealing animal put into a picture just to save the job. This trick does not fool anyone. I never include an animal in any picture unless it seems natural for it to be in the setting. But when you have a scene in which animals might be expected to appear, paint them well and put them in because people love to see them.

Posing animals requires patience but leads to amusing incidents. I once borrowed a duck to pose for me. The owner came along but we could not get the duck to stand still. Finally, while I looked on in astonishment, the owner took two small pieces of cardboard, placed them over the webbed parts of the feet and tacked the duck to the floor. I would not have dared attempt this but the owner explained that the web has no feeling. The duck seemed to agree for it did not appear to be at all uncomfortable as I painted it into my picture.

Dogs have great understanding and if they trust you, they will try to do what you want them to do if you can make them understand you. Here I am mumbling endearing terms to the pup and you can see how he responded.

Here I am using the pressure system on the dog to induce him to relax. The pressure was also transmitted to the boy's stomach and the boy's expression indicates he does not relish it.

This pup was a good actor but he would not hold his tail erect so I helped him get the idea. My assistant is using the pressure system which I have explained to induce the dog to relax.

Fido never heard of a dog with ears in this position but when he runs they are extended. He is sort of fed up with the whole idea but is not as uncomfortable as he appears.

The pup is standing still but here we were trying to make him look as though he were running down the road. I have a book on animal anatomy which I use constantly to help me in drawing dogs and other animals in action.

The pup was having an unpleasant time in posing for this picture — but so was I. I pay my animal models too and this one received a big hunk of meat after this picture was finished. Now he will be willing to pose for me again.

A note about your lesson

In this and preceding lessons we have laid the foundation for making a picture. First, we considered the importance of developing the right idea — because your picture is going to be no better than the idea. Then we considered the model — because your picture will be no better than your models — and we dwelt on the importance of faces and hands in telling a story. We have also considered research — because that, too, will determine the quality of your picture. In this lesson, we have considered the importance of photo-

graphs and the importance of the proper pose — because your picture's quality will be determined by these factors too.

So now we have the basic fundamentals which will determine how good your picture is after it is painted. In the next lesson we will start the actual making of the picture — but remember that regardless of how well you do the painting, your picture will suffer if you have slighted any of the basic steps in these first four lessons.

Norman Rockwell

DOG FOR SALE

Norman Rockwell

Making the Charcoal Drawing

The Charcoal Drawing

My method of picture making is similar to producing a movie, and I use it in making an illustration, a picture for an advertisement or a magazine cover. As in a movie, much preliminary work is necessary before starting the actual picture.

Story-telling pictures are primarily simple, everyday ideas presented with an easy-to-understand appeal, but it requires much time and thought and effort to get this direct simplification. This simple story idea of the picture or illustration more often than not is heightened by a wealth of contributing details, none of which can be carelessly drawn from imagination. Imagination enters through the picture ideas and the careful selection and skillful arrangement of the details.

In this lesson we will get into the actual drawing stage in my method of making a picture. I feel that the drawing phase is just about as challenging to your talent and skill and as much or even more fun than any other phase of picture making. But before we start, it is absolutely necessary for you to have mastered the groundwork preceding this phase. This was covered in the first four lessons and is summarized here.

1 — Get the picture idea

In the first lesson, we worked on developing a suitable idea for a picture. This idea is really the foundation on which all the rest of the process is built. I examined the ideas which you sent to me and tried my best to assist and advise you. Now you have selected the one or ones you believe are the best and these are what you will now carry through to completion. The purpose of all the other lessons will be to help you paint a picture that will express the basic idea clearly and fully so that the finished illustration will attract and interest the reader.

2 — Select the model

Next we considered selecting the right model for your illustration and I hope you realize the great importance of this step in the making of a picture. Someone has said that "Genius is the ability to take infinite pains," so take the pains to get the very best type of model at whatever cost, to tell your story. If you go about it right, you can induce almost anyone to pose for you. And remember to pay your models, no matter how little the pay may be and even though they do not want to be paid. The very fact that you are paying them is likely to cause them to give their best and if you pay them you are justified in demanding it.

3 — Do your research and collect props

Doing the necessary research and collecting your props takes brains and persistence. This important step must not be slighted. If it is, you will hear plenty from critical readers and a lot more from the art director. There really is no excuse for making mistakes in research — or simply not doing it. Remember that once the picture is published the fault cannot be corrected. Besides, research can be a lot of fun and you learn much. Never try to fake something if you can get the object and paint from it. When you know all about your subject by having done thorough research or, in the case of props, when you have them right in front of you, your picture will have the unmistakable stamp of authenticity and sincerity which it would lack otherwise.

4 — Pose and photograph the model

Remember that in posing and photographing the model, it is important for the model to understand the story you are trying to convey and it is your job to get the model to act and express the story. Get in there and act it out for your model to break down his self-consciousness, arouse his interest and gain his co-operation. And if you are taking photographs, don't spare the film — take more than enough. Use every bit of ingenuity you possess — cajole, laugh, cry, scold, encourage — do anything and everything, but get your story on film even if it kills the model and you too.

Without making a charcoal sketch, I personally would never be able to compose such a complicated group as this. I remember when I made this drawing how often I arranged and rearranged these figures to best express the story. I never could have done this directly on the final painting.

2 Here is a detail of the charcoal drawing in an early stage. I use charcoal because it is much easier to erase and change than pencil is, and because it is best to use to show tone.

Why I make a complete charcoal sketch

After all of this preliminary preparation, you now are ready to start your picture!

Often other illustrators and well-meaning friends ask why I make such exhaustively complete charcoal drawings in preparation for my pictures. The answer is that I am no genius — I have to work out everything the hard way. If I were painting portraits or landscapes, perhaps a very rough preliminary sketch would suffice, but when I am working on a story-telling picture, every detail must be planned in advance.

It is in the charcoal drawing that I start with the first rough sketch and, with the help of photographs of models and props, completely develop the story and solve, to the best of my ability, all the problems of drawing, composition and tone — in fact every problem but that of color. You, yourself, may later use some other method of doing this or perhaps you may be able to skip this step altogether. But certainly you will learn much if you follow it at the start.

Personally, I love this part of picture making because it seems to me the very essence of story telling. When your charcoal drawing is finished, it should express clearly and interestingly what you want to tell. Later the color and final painting will enhance it, but the real foundation of the picture is right here.

Sometimes it takes me as long or even longer to make the charcoal layout than to make the final painting. I usually figure a week of steady work to make a

3 This shows an early stage in the final painting. Note how closely I followed the drawing, composition and values which I had established so carefully in my charcoal drawing.

So do not feel that the time and energy you devote to this important step in picture making is wasted, because it is here, more than in any other part in making a picture, that you can express and develop your ability as a draftsman, your power of composition, your sense of humor or pathos, your ability to make every detail add to the message you want to convey.

My way of making the charcoal layout varies with the picture problem. Sometimes I only make a carefully drawn and composed line drawing, using no values. Once in a while, if the picture is quite small, I use pencil instead of charcoal. But most often I develop

How I make the charcoal sketch

Here I am making a sketch, freehand, from a photograph — but, of course, I have no photographs of the gnomes who are helping Santa. I am using charcoal and am drawing on "architect's detail paper" which is dull yellow in color, is made in six-yard rolls in different widths and can be obtained in artists' or architects' supply stores. I use the forty-two inch width. The paper is very strong and can take terrific punishment. There is one trick I employ. Before starting a drawing I rub every square inch of the surface I am going to use with my kneaded eraser. This is very irksome, but unfortunately necessary, because there is a thin imperceptible surface on the paper which must be rubbed off. Otherwise, when you are rubbing in your tone values, the unrubbed parts will take a different tone than those on which you use the eraser. There may be an easier way to remove this objectionable surface but I have not discovered it. If you find one, let me know. Contrary to the practice of many illustrators, I do all my work on an easel with the drawing in a vertical position. This is just a habit of mine and you may prefer to work with your paper on a slanted drawing table.

Here I am working with the aid of the balopticon which operates like the old magic lantern, projecting a sketch or photograph (not larger than five and one-half inches) to almost any size you desire. The farther away from the balopticon the reflected image is, the greater the enlargement.

How and why I use the balopticon

The balopticon is an evil, inartistic, habit-forming, lazy and vicious machine! It also is a useful, time-saving, practical and helpful one. I use one often — and am thoroughly ashamed of it. I hide it whenever I hear people coming.

My two lame excuses for using it are: most of the other fellows use it, and nowadays you don't drive a horse and buggy when you can use a car. But, still, I am ashamed of using a balopticon and later I will tell you how I am able to use it less and less. Nevertheless, I always will have one on hand because it is a great help in many wholly good and legitimate ways.

I place my original rough sketch, which I made before I used any models, in the balopticon. Then I place my drawing board with the erased, detail paper on it on the vertical easel. I then try different sizes of enlargement by moving the easel either nearer to or

farther away from the machine until I decide what size I want to paint the particular subject under consideration. This is one operation in which the balopticon is a great help because you can see the perfect and complete enlargement of the sketch on your paper and it gives you a fine idea of just what size you will want to make your finished drawing. Personally, I like to paint the human head about five inches in height.

When I have decided what size I want to make the drawing, I draw the reflected sketch on the detail paper with charcoal, lightly and in outline. Then I take the photograph of the most important figure and place that in the balopticon and enlarge it to the size of the same figure on the enlarged drawing of the sketch. I then erase the figure in the enlargement of the sketch and draw in lightly in charcoal the outline from the figure in the photograph. I do not do this very

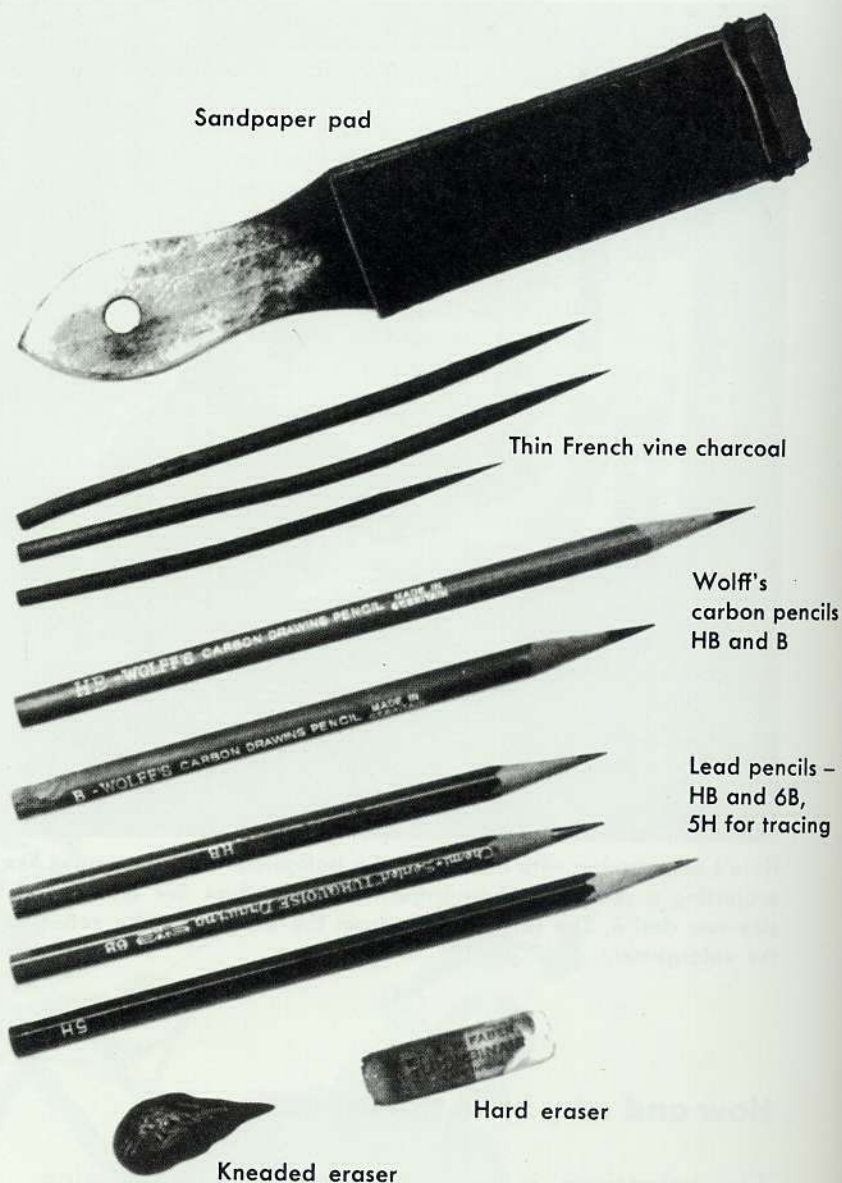completely as it is only the preliminary tracing. I repeat this process with all the figures in the picture.

When I am finished, I have a pretty good rough idea of how the whole drawing will look and I can see if I am getting the figures in their right proportions to each other. Next, I start all over with the main figure and project it on the charcoal outline already made. Now I draw this figure more carefully, using Wolff pencil instead of charcoal. The advantage of using Wolff pencil is that later you can work your charcoal over the crayon lines without smudging them, yet the pencil can be erased if necessary and will blend with your charcoal work.

When using the balopticon in this way, I do not simply copy everything which is projected from the photograph. Instead, I make many, many changes, large and small, in order to make the drawing like the image in my mind of what I want to portray. I cannot emphasize this point too much. The real danger in using the balopticon is that you will develop a lazy tendency to follow the image exactly instead of following the creative idea or image within yourself.

For example, I may make a head smaller in proportion to the body than it appears in the photograph, or lengthen the neck or enlarge an ear. There are many much smaller changes which I make instinctively if I am following the creative idea or image in my own mind. *Never just thoughtlessly copy the projection of the photograph.*

Also, remember that when this drawing from the balopticon is finished, it is necessarily rather uninspired and it is up to you to make it yours by going further with that same process of trying to create as nearly as possible the image which is in your mind, giving it your own personal treatment and tone.

As I will explain later, I am trying to get away from the balopticon for drawing figures because I am trying to draw less photographically and more creatively. But I still find it indispensable for enlarging a sketch, putting in architectural details or lettering or some complicated design, and in deciding what size I want to paint a picture. But it is strictly up to you as to how much you use it.

Sandpaper pad

Thin French vine charcoal

Wolff's carbon pencils HB and B

Lead pencils – HB and 6B, 5H for tracing

Hard eraser

Kneaded eraser

These are the materials I use in making a charcoal sketch. I keep my charcoal sharpened at all times with the sandpaper pad. In fact, when I am making such a sketch, the first thing I do every morning is to sharpen ten or twelve sticks and have them in readiness. It is difficult now to get good kneaded erasers. I hate them when they are too oily so when I buy new ones, I feel them first and pick out the dryer ones. This is not too satisfactory but it helps. There used to be a wonderful French charcoal called Fusain Rouget No. 2 but it is unobtainable now. I hope it will be available again soon. Meanwhile, I buy the best French charcoal I can get and make it do. Then I use Wolff pencils which are, I believe, made from compressed charcoal. I use the grades HB, B, 2B and 4B. They are wonderful. I use the HB or B when I trace with the balopticon, and the 2B and 4B when I want to finish the drawing in values, but in pencil. One of the great advantages of these pencils is that you can use them with charcoal which you cannot do with regular lead pencils. Sometimes, if the sketch is very small, as I said before, I use Venus pencils from start to finish. The hand eraser I alway have ready to erase something which the kneaded eraser will not obliterate. I never use stumps, but just my finger for blending.

Step-by-step

This is a photograph and my drawing of it made with the help of the balopticon. I have made some seemingly slight changes in doing the drawing but these changes will mean a lot when I do the finished drawing with the help of this outline. The skill and taste which you use in making such changes represents your own personal feeling and helps to make your work distinctive and your own. Never try to be different just to be different or just for effect and never try to create a superficial style. *Feel intensely* what you draw or paint. Then your work will automatically take on your distinctive personality and will be recognized as yours and only yours. I used an HB Wolff pencil on this.


1
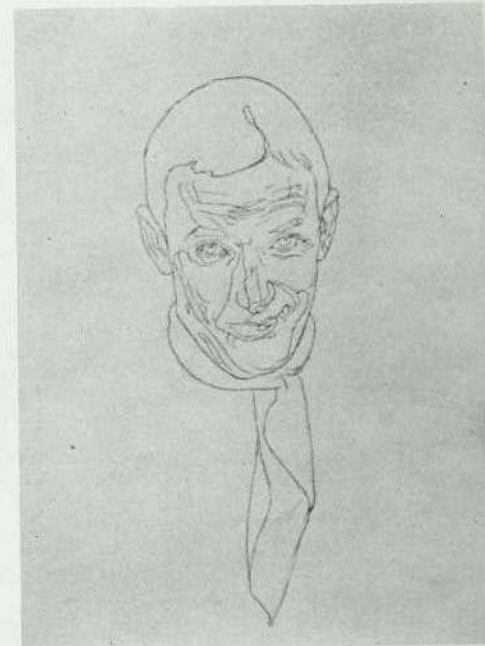
2
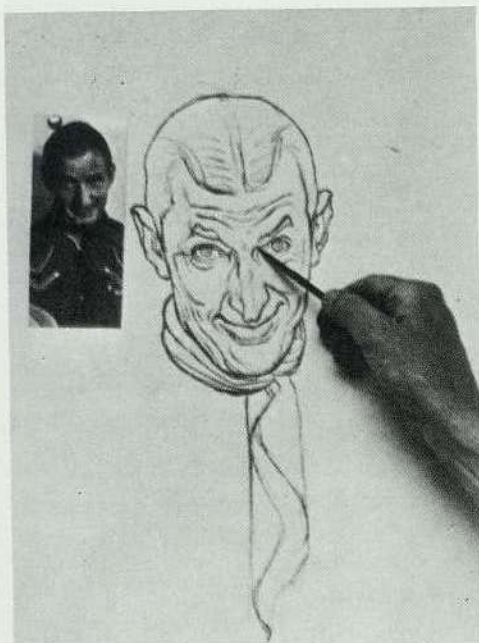
3 In making a charcoal drawing after blowing it up with the aid of the balopticon, I start by outlining the drawing, using a very sharp charcoal stick. I do not rough it in with large, bold strokes, but do the work carefully and as thoughtfully as I can. I carry the outline quite far, as you can see here, correcting and changing frequently with the help of the kneaded eraser. In this particular drawing I have lifted the eyebrows, lengthened the nose and changed the hair part, among other things.
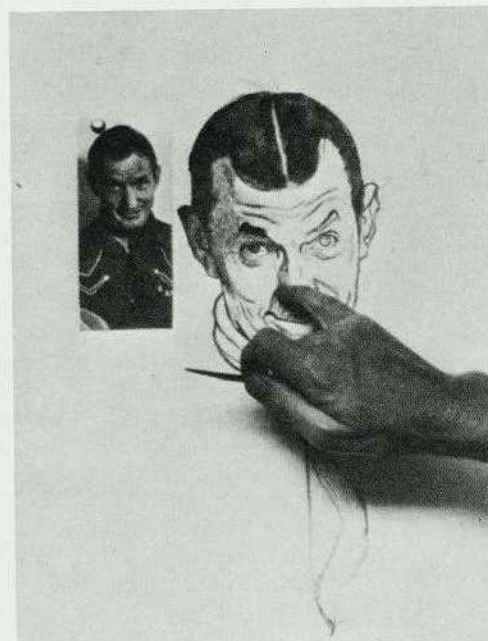
4 After I have outlined the drawing, I begin putting in the tone values. I start by roughing in carefully with the charcoal, then rubbing in the required tones with my finger. My hands naturally are quite dry so I can do this. If your hands are naturally moist, it will be necessary for you to employ a stump in doing this.
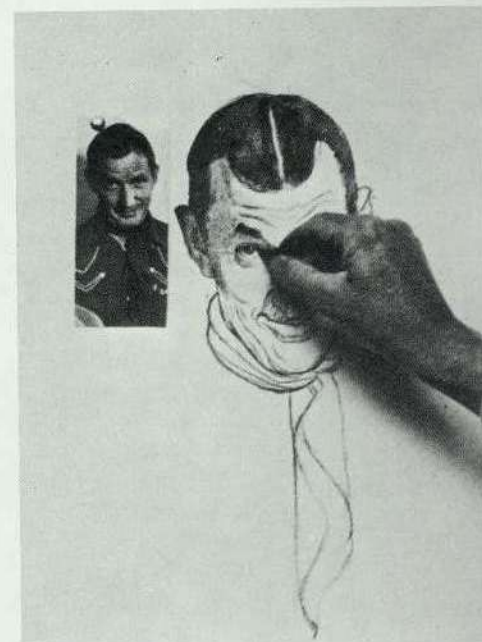
5 Thank God for kneaded erasers! All the time I am putting in the values I am correcting and cleaning up with the kneaded eraser. I seem to work about as much with the eraser as with the charcoal. As I have said, I also have a hard eraser handy when the kneaded one can't do the job. Finally, of course, I spray fixatif on the completed drawing.

At this point, I have the general drawing arranged and, with the aid of a photograph, am carrying the drawing forward to completion with tone values. By comparing the arrangement of the objects in the drawing and the photograph, you will notice that I have rearranged some of them so they are placed more compactly about the figure. This is a great advantage we artists have over the camera — we can select and arrange but the camera cannot. It can only record what is before it. We also can emphasize something, such as the head of the baseball player in this drawing. We can emphasize the darks and lights on his face to attract attention to him. We can exaggerate his expression and make him even more woebegone than the photograph shows him. Often, at this stage, I will enlarge an eye, reduce the size of the mouth or do any number of things to make the character funnier or sadder or to portray any other expression needed to put over the story. I experiment over and over, trying anything I can think of to make a face more entertaining and interesting. This is the spot in the whole job where such things can best be done and this is the great advantage of charcoal drawing. Here is another trick I employ. When I have decided upon the particular photograph which I am going to use out of all that I have taken for the picture, I cut off and discard all parts of the photograph which I do not intend to use. This avoids confusion in working with the photograph and it is easier to thumbtack it to the drawing board as I have done here.

To Charlie Grimm, a congratulations but
wonderful manager,
Norman Rockwell
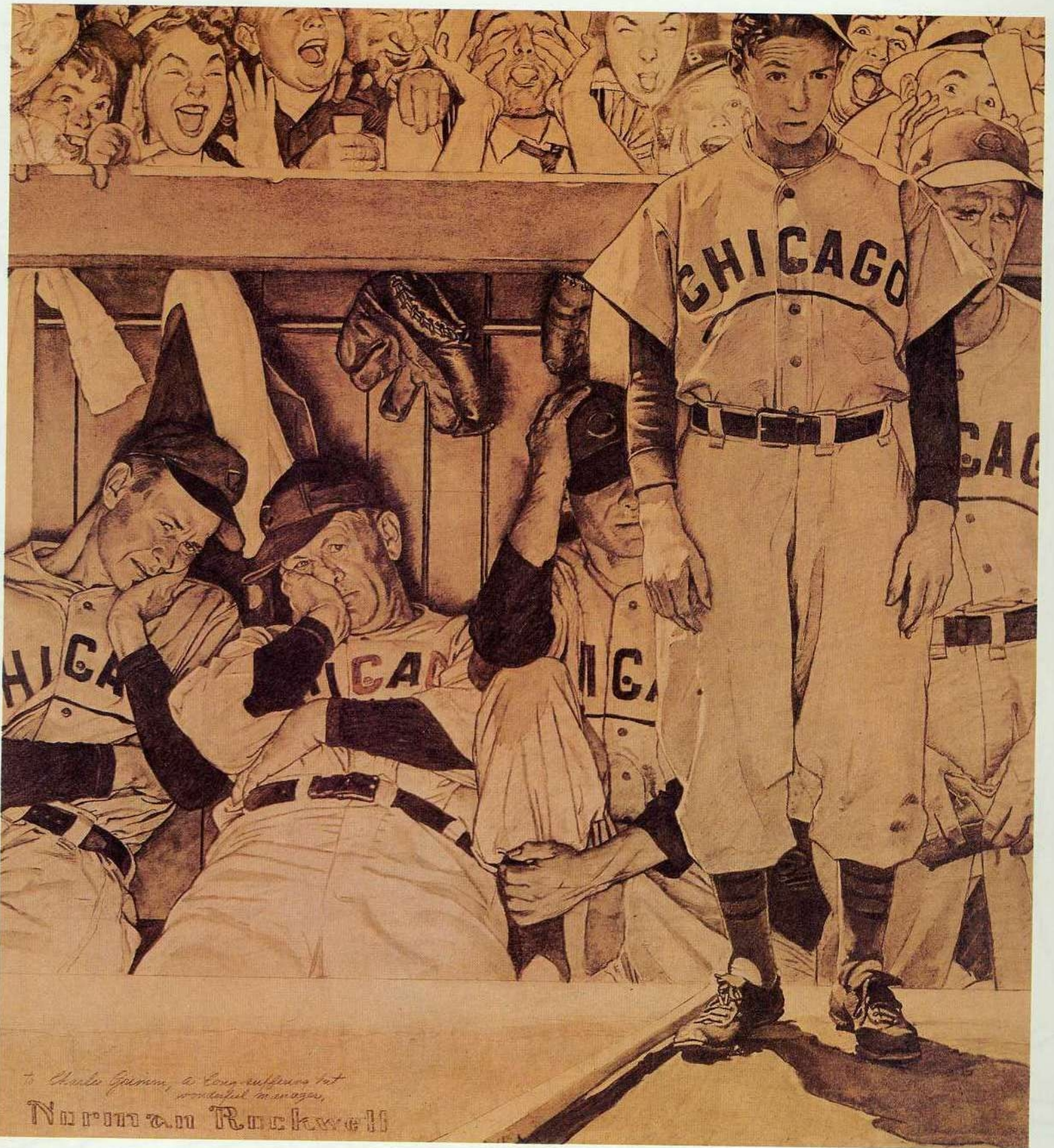
Sometimes I do not use tone values but simply make an outline drawing. I do not like to do this but when I am behind schedule and there is a deadline to meet and an art editor is shouting his head off, I sometimes cheat to this extent. But I never get as good a finished job this way, and it always hurts my conscience. On other occasions, the subject is so complicated that I feel it would take so long to make a complete tone drawing that it would tire me out and I would lose my enthusiasm by the time I got to the painting. But these, I guess, are fake arguments and down in my heart I know it, because, I repeat, I never do as good a job this way as when I do a complete charcoal. It is amazing and wonderful how we can kid ourselves. For myself, I have found no shortcuts to take the place of the finished charcoal. This detail of the charcoal drawing is reproduced actual size. Above is shown the complete sketch.
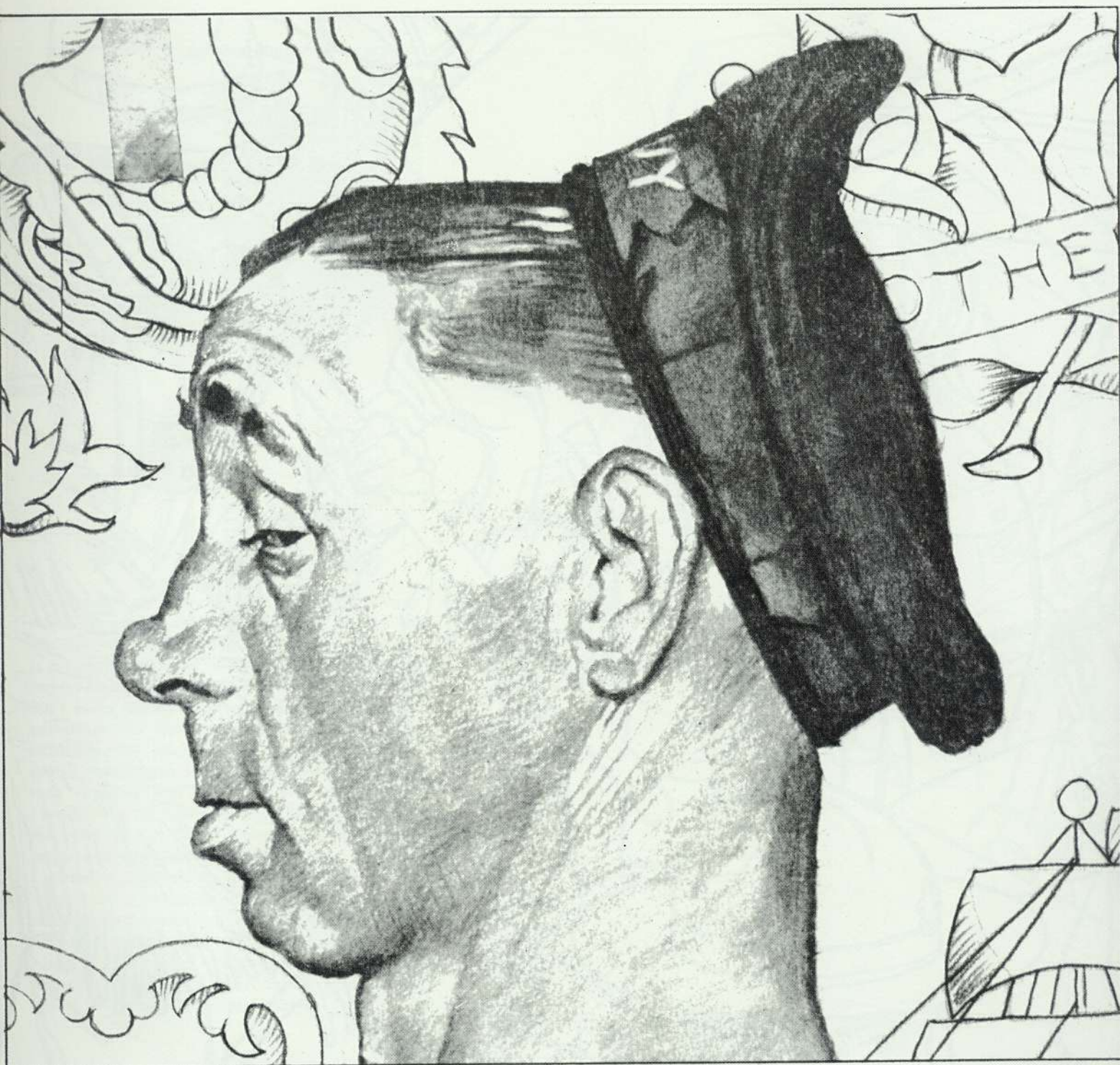
Actual size detail.

What kind of charcoal drawing to make

Above is a charcoal which I carried just as far as I could in drawing and tone dvalues. I did this because I wanted to establish the character of the sailor as completely as possible. The model, a friend of mine, is a rather handsome, intelligent-appearing fellow, whereas I wanted to show a good-natured but dumb gob. I felt that I could not make the necessary changes while painting from the photograph of the model, so I completely established the character in my charcoal.

I lowered the forehead, gave the figure a baseball haircut, lifted the eyebrows, made heavy upper lids for the eyes, pugged the nose, enlarged the upper lip, gave him a heavy lower lip, weakened the chin and thickened the neck. I did not do this rapidly, but kept trying changes in the face until I made him into the stupid sailor I wanted him to appear. I love this type of cartooning, but you must take care not to make a character repulsive. It is the kindly humor that counts

and I really love this sailor — he may be dumb but he is a good fellow. If you like and have sympathy for a character, your audience will like and sympathize with him.

The model for the other drawing was just about the type I wanted to portray so I felt it was unnecessary to finish the drawing in tone. It seemed to me that I did not need to change his features to fit the part of the piano tuner he was portraying — but I was wrong. If I had worked further and developed the mild, unin-

spired, meek little piano tuner type better, it would have made a more interesting picture.

You must always carry your characters just this side of caricatures. If you intend to show a weak character, make him really weak. If he is supposed to be comical, do everything within the bounds of good taste to make him lovable and laughable. Never leave the observer in any doubt about what you mean to say.
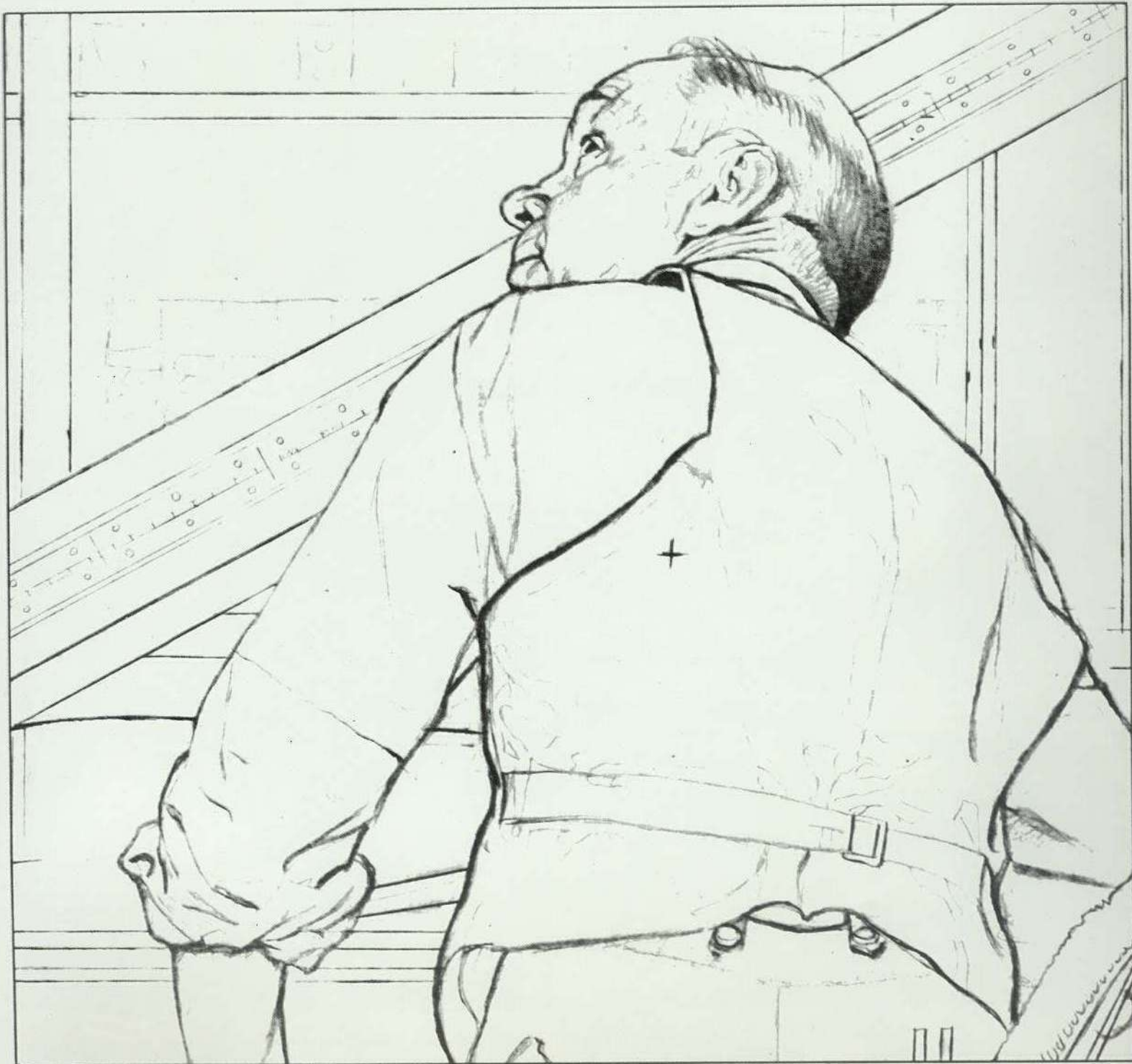
This is a typical charcoal layout such as I make after I have established the picture idea, done all my research, collected the necessary props, selected my models and posed and photographed them. To me, this is an essential step preceding my color sketch and the finished painting. This drawing was thirty-one by forty-one inches.

Norman Rockwell

**How I did
one charcoal
sketch**
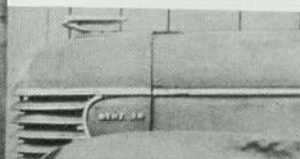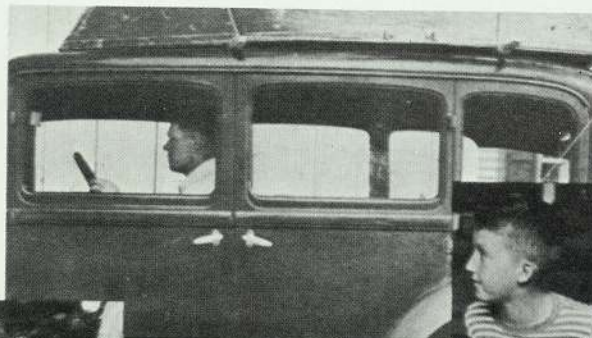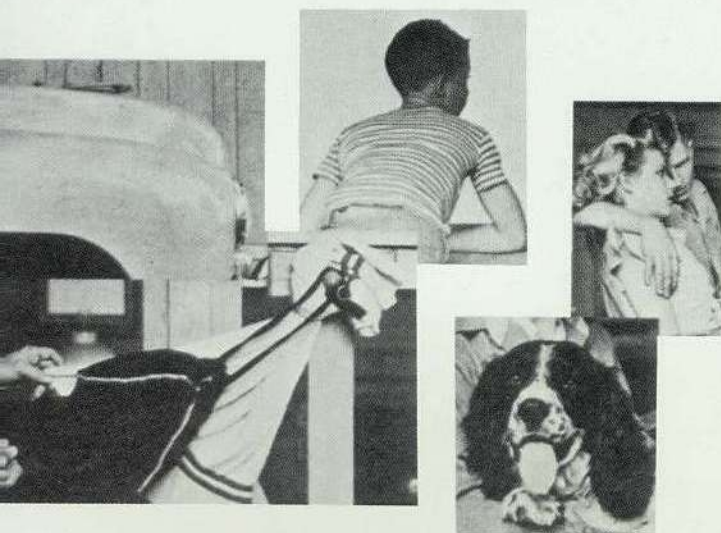
The subject of this illustration presented a new and fascinating problem in picture making to me because it involved making two pictures and using the same models, yet changing their expressions and their moods completely. If you will examine the picture closely as it finally appeared (shown on the next page), you will see that I had to make a number of changes, even after these rather exhaustive charcoal preliminaries. The reason was that in the case of the boy in the center, for example, I found that unless the same character was in virtually the same pose in both pictures, observers were likely to miss the point that it was the same family going and coming. ➡

As with all of my pictures, I tried this one out on anyone I could coax into the studio and it took a lot of work before I was satisfied that anyone who saw the picture got the idea instantly. Love thy father and thy mother — but don't depend upon their criticism of your pictures because they love and admire you too much. It is much better to ask your worst enemies, total strangers, laymen and artists, experts on the subject at hand and people who know nothing about the subject. When they all understand and get the idea and seem entertained by it — then, boy, you've got it!

And "it" all should be in your charcoal preliminary. When I show a charcoal, I watch the observer's face. If his face lights up and shows understanding and interest, I am delighted. On the other hand, if he seems confused or bored or tries by pretty speeches, which I know he doesn't really mean, to assure me it's wonderful, then I know I must go back to work and keep at it until people do *honestly* respond. This is *not* the way of the fine arts painter but we illustrators are not working to please a small, distinguished group of art critics or connoisseurs but for the great, dear and good old American public.

You will notice that all the photographs I employed are cropped or cut down to the particular part of the photograph I used. This eliminates all the distracting parts of the photographs which I do not need for reference. This simple stunt saves me a lot of time and energy. You also will notice that I left out the rear end of the station wagon and put in the end of another car. I did this, first, because that part of the station wagon did not seem to explain itself and, second, because I felt that the vertical lines stopped the action.

You also will note that I left out the two rumble-seat lovers in the foreground of the second picture. At first I thought they were a very funny contrast to the very much married group above, but I found they confused observers, so out they came. At first I was going to make the background for one picture a morning sky and that for the second an evening sky, but here again this was not obvious enough to get the idea over instantly.

I have shown on this page some — but not all — of the photographs which I took for this job but did not use. As I have said, if you use photographs, never spare the camera. Take every possible pose and expression until you feel you have everything you can possibly require and have it just right. After all, it costs a lot more if you must get your models back for retakes. Also, I find that I am never as interested in posing re-takes and besides the models have by then lost that first impulsive response to the idea.

I love working out all of the story telling details for a picture and it is in the charcoal preliminary that you have a chance to try them out. Some of the details with which I experimented in this picture included the play pen, the bathing suits and towel, the rowboat and oars and the pennant. Homely details like this interest the public and you will find you will receive many letters of appreciation just because you include them. For example, the kid blowing the bubble gum brought letters of various kinds. Some objected to showing such a "vulgar performance," others wrote jolly letters about the boy and his gum and a bubble gum firm sent me a whole crate of gum "in appreciation." The gift certainly made a hit with my boys.

This particular type of picture problem would have been impossible for me to solve satisfactorily without making a charcoal drawing. I never could have worked out the many complications of the two contrasting pictures without it.

Norman
Rockwell

Here is an actual size reproduction of one of my charcoal pre-
liminaries. As I have explained, I like to paint human heads about
five inches high because this gives me a chance to paint the fea-
tures and expressions in complete detail. It also means that when
I get to the painting, I can paint with bristle brushes and not the
smaller sable brushes which I find necessary when I paint smaller.
In determining the size of the picture I plan to paint, I consider
whether it is a subject depending for its appeal on the careful
painting of facial expression or on the over-all atmosphere of the
picture. If it is the former, I want five-inch heads and paint the
picture large enough to get them. If it is the latter, I paint a
smaller picture because I feel that it is easier in this way to keep
the mood and atmosphere of the whole picture under control.
This drawing of the Scouts and the dog was a balopticon, blow-
up job. It was done in this way partly because in a Boy Scout
calendar the Scout officials are very particular that every detail
and insignia on the uniforms is right in size and exactly placed.
Naturally, blowing up the photographs which showed every de-
tail correctly placed, insured this accuracy.

Sometimes I use pencil
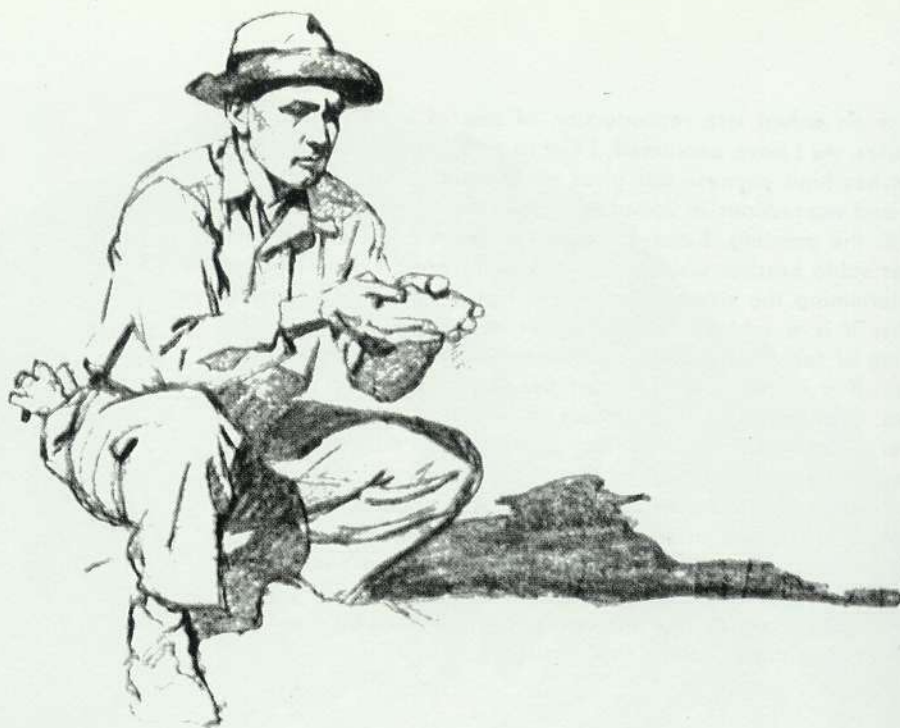
Sometimes, as in the case of the drawing for the accompanying picture, I make a pencil drawing for a water color rendering. I do not often use water color but when I do, I always make the preliminary in pencil because I feel that it is more appropriate. Subjects which I do in water color are usually very simple. I never quite feel at home with this medium but it is more direct and must, of necessity, be much quicker.
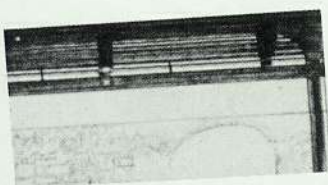
Scissors and paste save time

You can do an awful lot of erasing and changing on the architect's detail paper but even it will go sour after too much punishment. When that happens, here is a stunt which I often use in making a charcoal preliminary. Sometimes, as in the example here, I need to change a whole area but, because of many changes, I have lost the surface of the paper. Then I simply cut out the offending section and substitute a new clean piece with rubber cement. At other times, I decide that a whole section of a drawing would look better elsewhere. In using this aid, put rubber cement on both sides where you are connecting it so that you can draw or make a tone right across the connection.

Paste-up of new paper

Paste-up of new paper
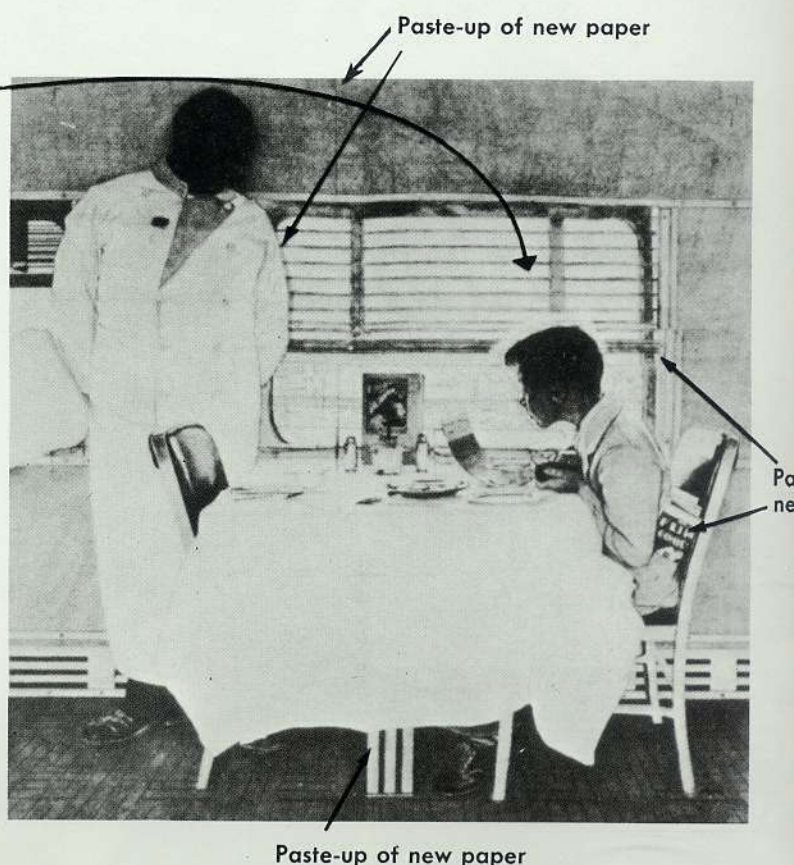
Sometimes I must make several sketches

Here is an example of what I mean when I say you should not spare yourself in doing the best work of which you are capable, no matter what this involves. In this case I started out with the wrong models. After I had completed the sketch at the left, I felt that I had the wrong husband and baby (no scandal involved). The man with the spectacles, it seemed to me, was too extreme a type. My women advisers confirmed this suspicion when they commented that "a girl as cute as she is would not have a husband like him."

I wanted them to be a sort of Blondie and Dagwood pair. The whole idea I wanted to express was that they were a perfectly mated and loving couple in everything except politics. I wanted to make the observer feel that after election they would love each other as much as they used to. It seemed to me that my first male model was too severe a type and people might think he was like this all the time, so I got a second model who seemed to be more the type of the girl.

Then it seemed to me that the first baby was not cute enough for a pair like Blondie and Dagwood to have, so, after trying three babies, I decided on the one which has been substituted in the drawing on the right.

I did not finish the tone values on these drawings because they were represented by rather mechanical and architectural details and also because I had fooled around changing models so long that the due date for delivery was approaching.

I think that these two drawings show quite clearly the importance of having the right models for the right picture and why you should not spare yourself when you do make a mistake. And I hope that I have convinced you of the need for making a careful charcoal preliminary for a story-telling picture. There are so many problems to be solved which cannot be worked out when you are struggling with paint and color. Some artists are able to skip this preliminary work when making an illustration for a story and start right in with paints and brushes on the canvas, but when faced with the job of making a picture which tells a complete story all by itself, all of them make some sort of very exhaustive and complete drawing before starting to paint. I do not feel that this is a boring and unpleasant part of picture making but a very exciting and creative part of it — sometimes *the* most exciting and creative part.

Charcoal studies for a finished painting

I have devoted a second lesson to the charcoal preliminary because I *know* that this is the most important step in making any story-telling picture, whether it is for an advertisement, a calendar, an illustration or a magazine cover.

Here is where you really organize your idea or story. Here is where you succeed or fail. As I have said, your final painting technique may be superb and fascinate other artists and your color may be beautiful and charming *but* — in a story-telling picture — if you do not *clearly* and *interestingly* tell your story, your picture is a flop.

In the preceding lesson I explained how I make my charcoal preliminaries. All of my preliminaries are based on the technique which I described but I do vary my procedure slightly for different pictures because different subjects present different problems. Another reason is that it becomes very boring and monotonous always to do a thing the very same way.

The painting reproduced on page 136 shows a *Post* cover which I made. The procedure I used varied considerably from the procedure which I explained in the preceding lesson. Let us analyze this cover and my step-by-step procedure in making it to find why I changed my working methods.

Why, oh, why do I paint such involved and complicated pictures? There are about twenty-five figures in this one, not counting the pigeons, My only excuse is that I wanted to paint this subject and I started to do the job with only ten people in it. Then, like Topsy, it "just growed." But here's the payoff. When I delivered it, the wonderful, kind and understanding art editor of the *Post* recognized the work I had put into it and gave me a substantial bonus over and above my regular price for a cover.

The sketch on page 138 shows the pencil (not charcoal) preliminary which I made for this picture. Why did I make it just this way? I got the basic idea for the picture from my old friend, Clyde Forsythe, a cartoonist and landscape painter who has been a good and helpful friend for many years. He told me of seeing a whole line of traffic stalled by a pup sitting unconcernedly in the middle of a busy thoroughfare. It seemed to me that the idea had picture possibilities and I started thinking about it and making some rough sketches. At first it seemed to me that a great big truck stopped by a small truck would be even funnier. Then one day I happened to walk down a narrow alley in Los Angeles where I was working at the time and the idea of a big truck stuck in a narrow alley came to me. The idea of the truck, the pup, the alley and a lot of excited people seemed just right.

So I went to a moving company and asked to borrow one of their big moving vans. The company was most co-operative and even painted the front of the cab and trailer red as I desired. Then one Sunday morning they sent the van and two truckers over to my alley. Meanwhile I had assembled a bunch of models who seemed best suited to pose for the various characters I had in mind to people the alley. I also had a Hollywood photographer on hand. We all got together in the alley at 10 a.m. and before the day was finished we had taken seventy-two photographs.

It was a busy day but a lot of fun because quite a crowd of inhabitants of the alley gathered to watch and kibitz from the sidelines. In fact, there was a wedding in progress in the apartment house shown at the left of my picture and my whole group was invited on the spur of the moment and we kissed the bride and drank champagne toasts.

The next day my photographer showed me seventy-two contact prints and I selected about forty which I needed. He made 8 by 10-inch enlargements of those for me to work from. So now I was ready for the preliminary drawing.

From past experience I knew that the final painting of this scene should be rather small. I have found that the success of this type of picture depends more on the general over-all scene than on the individual characters in it and I know I can do a better job of an over-all scene if I make the original rather small. Furthermore if I painted a scene like this with all its component parts very large it would mean months and months of work.
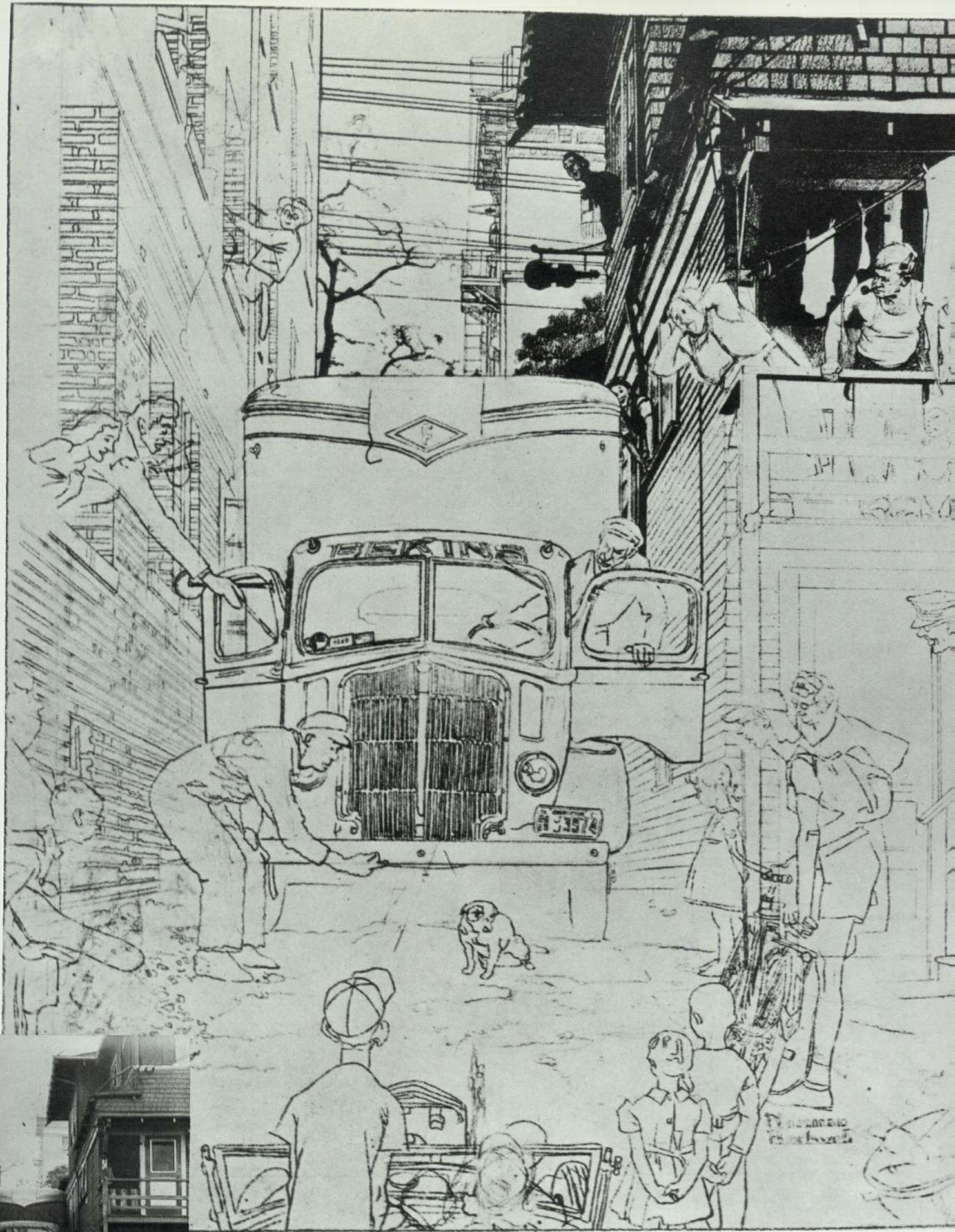
1 First, I took the accompanying photograph of the general scene in the alley and, with the help of the dear old Balopticon, blew it up. I traced the blown-up scene on heavyweight Strathmore illustration board, using an HB Venus pencil. Then I roughly sketched in the figures over my blow-up, using the charcoal which can, of course, be more easily erased. The accompanying photograph shows the drawing at this stage. From this point I deviated from the procedure which I described in the last lesson. Instead of blowing up the figures from the photographs directly onto the master drawing, I made separate drawings of each character on heavy transparent tracing paper. In making these drawings I did *not* blow them up from the photographs with the Balopticon as I normally do, but drew them freehand from the separate photographs. I did this, fondly hoping that the results would not be photographic copies but my own creative conceptions of the various characters. By doing this I hoped that the resulting picture would represent a *creative pictorial whole*. This way of doing it involved a lot more work but when the picture was finished, I felt that it was worth all the extra effort involved.

...ing these individual sketches was a lot of fun but there were also ...me problems to solve. First, there was Joe Mugniani, a good friend ...d a very fine artist who teaches art at the Los Angeles County Art ...stitute. He is a grand person and — in a completely harmless way — ...ite a guy with the ladies. So, as always happens with my friends, I ...essed him into service as a model, had him pose as an artist and ...ctured him with a comically sexy model. Shown here are the photo-...aphs which I used for these two characters and the drawings which I ...ade. Note how I emphasized the expression and action of the artist ...d how I completely changed the character of the model. This is the ...nd of picture-making I really enjoy — creating comical and lovable ...eople (or at least I hope and try to make them that way). It has been ...arged that I can't paint a really sexy female so when I started to ...aw this sketch of the artist's model I thought to myself, "This time ...I show them." When I finished the picture I pointed with pride to it ...nd asked my friends, "Isn't she just as sexy a dame as Al Parker or ...n Whitcomb could paint?" But they only laughed and remarked, ...Well, she's cute — but she is not very sexy." So it appears I'll just ...ave to struggle along as a frustrated, human-interest illustrator.
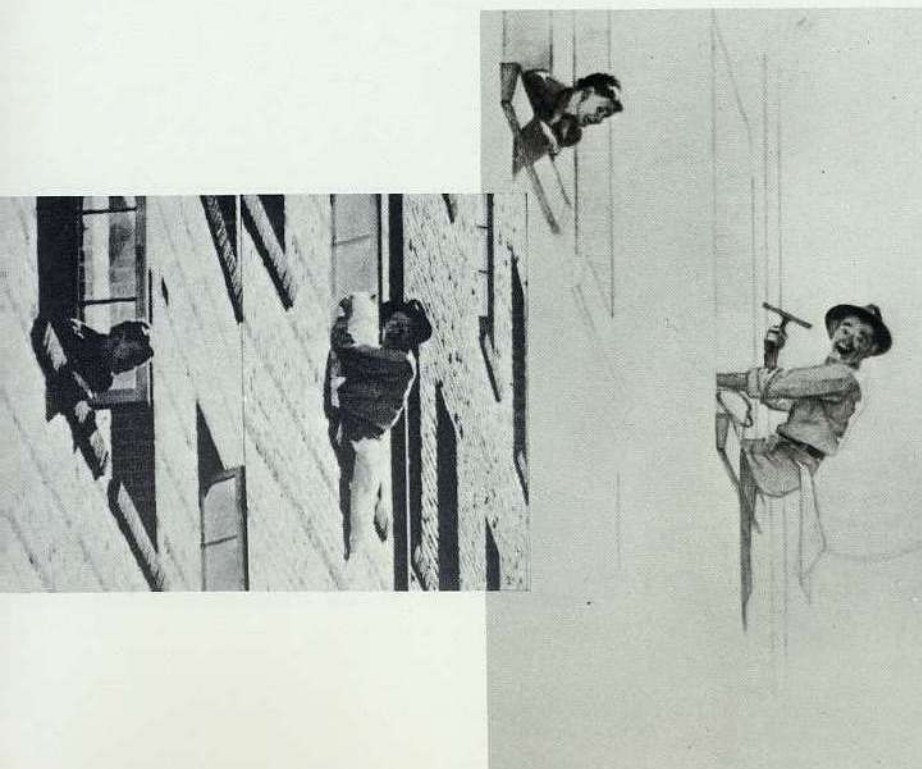
3 The man sitting in the window is Jack Farman, the janitor of the Los Angeles County Art Institute, a real character loved by all the art students. He posed so enthusiastically that he all but lost his balance on the window sill and I exaggerated this in my sketch of him. Although he posed perilously, I thought he should hang out the window even further. That is why I straightened his arm. I thought the squeegee also added interest. I stylized the rag hanging out of his pocket to emphasize the vertical. I believe that if any line is nearly horizontal or nearly vertical, it is greatly improved by making it absolutely horizontal or vertical. This gives a strength and decorativeness to a picture that really helps. The woman in the photograph actually lived in the apartment where she is shown. She was fascinated by the activity in the alley and wanted to be in the picture, too. So I put her in as you can see from the sketch.
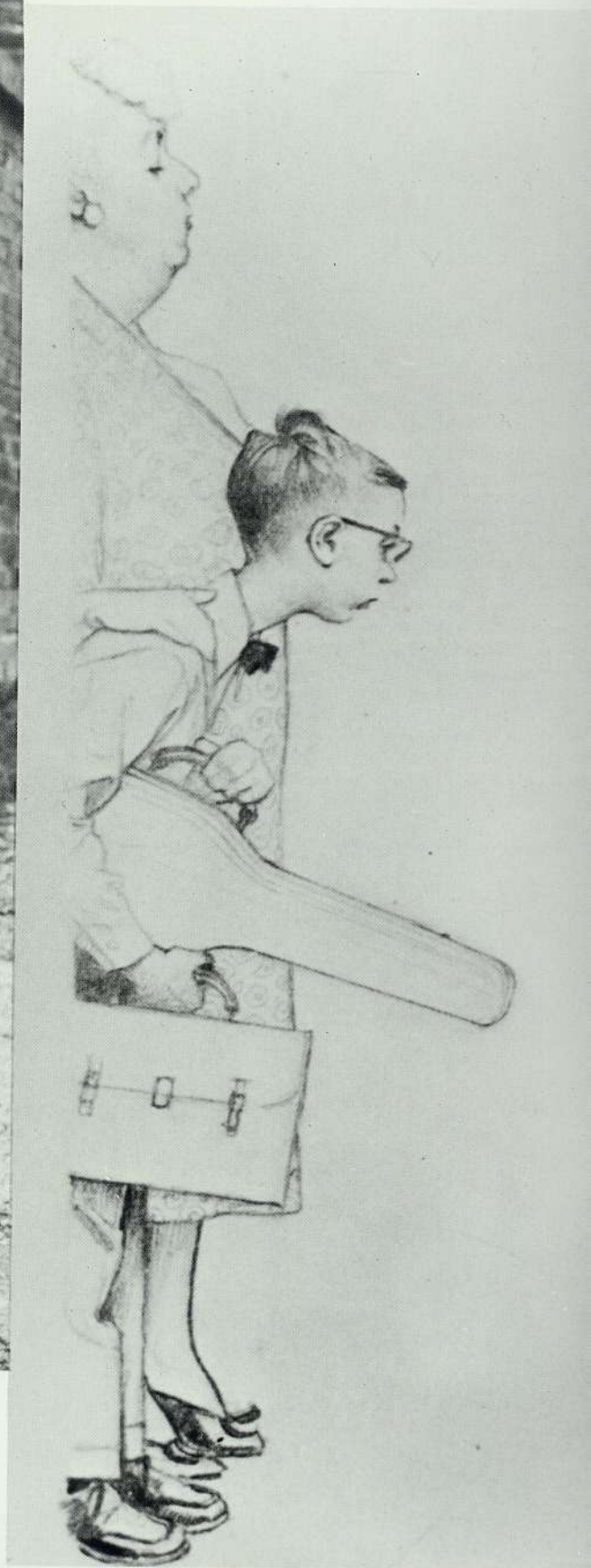
4 The lady in the photograph is the sister of my photographer, a very charming woman — and look what I did to her in the sketch. She never will forgive me, I know, but I wanted one character who was completely out of character with the alley. With her is my son, Peter, and I done him dirt too, but I told him that it was all for Art. I hoped that close observers would figure out that when the excitement has subsided, the boy with the violin will cross the alley with his mama, mount the stairs and go to the violin professor on the second floor for his music lesson. I like to inject these little secondary stories into my pictures. I changed the lady's hat completely and for two reasons. The large hat in the photograph did not seem silly enough to make the figure comical and also, the main line of the hat pointed away from the pup. The line of the hat I used repeats the line of the lady's ample bosom and also points to the dog. The woman's hand at her mouth in the photograph suggested timidity or hesitation and I wanted nothing timid or hesitant about the very positive and domineering mother. The raised eyebrows and the exaggerated double chin gave her the pompous, aggressive appearance I wanted her to have. I directed the top line of Peter's head and the line of his glasses so they, too, pointed directly at the pup. By making him thinner and more sissified, I tried to make the boy a little more pathetic under the domination of his mother. Elongating his neck made him appear more excited — and more silly — and I thought also suggested that he would much rather play with the dog than play on the darned violin for the professor.

5 Here is a photograph of the "hot rod" which I used in my picture. These stripped down old cars are popular with youngsters. The person standing in the car was an art student. The other figures were put in as after-thoughts and I photographed them later. It seemed to me that they lent reality because it is typical of these youngsters to crowd three or four into the front seat. To emphasize the youth and character of the standing figure, I made his neck thinner and longer and his shoulders narrower and more rounded. To accentuate the faddish styles of the young fry, I enlarged the visor of his cap. This made a nice form repeating the large forms of his ears and, more important, it again points directly toward the dog. The visor on the girl's cap also was enlarged and you will notice that her visor also points at the dog.

The two women I placed in the "hot rod" were just afterthoughts. They were art students and I had them photographed behind my studio later, and not in the alley. The whole "hot rod" idea, as a matter of fact, was an afterthought but it served a useful purpose. I felt that the idea of a group opposing the truck in the alley helped to emphasize the traffic snarl caused by the pup. It also swung the composition around the bottom of the picture. After all of the work and thought which I put in on this group, it almost broke my heart to see it eliminated when the picture was published — but such is life.

6 The little girl, daughter of the artist who posed in the window, was a very fastidious young lady, hence the cloth to protect her feet. Her father held up the white board to reflect light on her shadow side. I changed her a bit so she would fit the alley environment better — or so I thought. To emphasize the simple form of a child's dress and to simplify the line from the neck to the edge of the skirt, I changed the line of the dress. Little girls' dresses do not break pronouncedly at the waist and this, in turn, gives them a cute, childlike quality that I always like to paint.

7 The two cute negro children were kids who posed at the art school. It seemed to me that they added character and authenticity to the alley, so in they went. They also help to carry the interest down and around to the figures in the "hot rod." Overlapping the figures adds a little more depth to the picture and makes them less tiresome than if they stood side by side. This also holds the two figures together as a unit in contrast to all the other figures in the alley. This
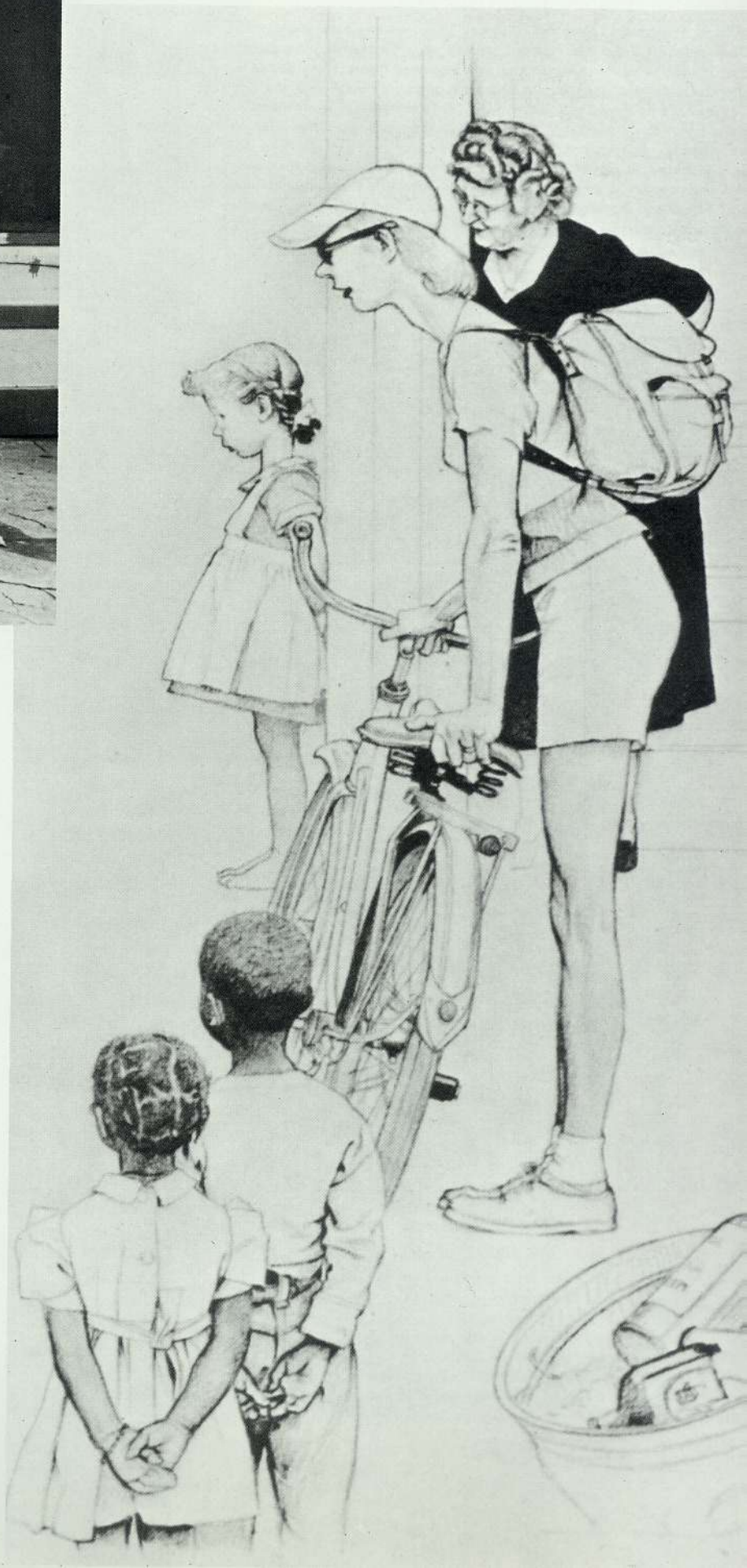
8 This is the landlady and the owner of the rooming house at the right. I had a tough time convincing her that she should pose but finally, after we were finished and the truck and models had departed, she consented. I wanted to use her very much because she seemed to me to represent the landlady type. Her unbelievably dyed hair and makeup seem to say the lady has seen "better days" and she is temporarily taking in "paying guests" to tide her over. In my youth I spent years in boarding houses, so I know the type only too well. But believe me, I do not think there is a better place to learn human nature — both its weaknesses and its nobility.

9 The girl with the bicycle also posed as the artist's model in the window. I changed her a lot in my picture because I wanted to show the type of serious-minded girl who goes in for bicycle riding and hiking instead of love and boys. I must admit that I leaned on the Balopticon when I did the bicycle. (After all, why kill yourself on such mechanical details.) I moved the bicycle further in front of the girl so I could show her long, skinny legs. Then I did everything I could to accent her gawkiness. I lengthened her neck, lengthened and straightened her arms and even put the stripe in her shorts to accent and exaggerate the long vertical lines.

10 The man who posed as the mail carrier was the gardener at the art school and I rented his outfit at a costumer's. I only wanted this figure as a spot at the right side of my picture, so when I drew him, I exaggerated the action. Again, I followed the old rule I have told you before — never draw a middle-sized tree, make it a mighty oak or a skinny sapling. Everyone is bored with the commonplace and usual, so I made the thin girl thinner and the round face of the man even rounder. Some critics say that Charles Dickens exaggerated too much, but he made an indelible impression on mankind. Your own good taste must dictate when your characterization becomes too obviously exaggeration. I did not photograph the baby with the wet diaper. He was a figment of my imagination, as was the cat.

11 The woman on the porch seemed to me to be just the right character for the part, so I did not change her much except to disarrange her hair even more and enlarge her mouth. It seemed to me she was right because she appeared to be the noisy, quarrelsome type you would expect to find in just such an alley. The line of her body leaning over the railing swings the composition line around just the way I wanted it. I tried to get the woman I used for the landlady to act out this part but she refused. This was just as well because the woman here was the complete extrovert. She was not bashful and she put her whole big heart into the part.

12 The model for the man on the porch with the pipe was a character I found in a park near the alley. To me, he was a dead ringer for Barry Fitzgerald. He was so perfect for the part that I just couldn't think of any emphasis or exaggeration that would improve him so I copied him. As I have said, the baby and cat were not drawn from photographs. I couldn't get a baby to look and act the way I wanted and there wasn't a single cat in the whole alley. Any way, it's fun now and then to "fake" a small or unimportant character. You do not have to struggle for spontaneity when you create such a character from imagination, but it is more difficult to make the character entirely real and convincing. In each case where I used photographs, I personally first went to the place where the person was to pose and acted out the pose myself to show the model what I wanted and get him in the mood. After all, in such a situation you must be the creator and the director and the spark plug that ignites the action. You must make your models lose any feeling of indifference or self-consciousness and get interested and excited.

As you can see, I changed the position of the truck man in the cab so he is looking over the top of the door instead of through the window. I felt that the pose which I finally used gave a better line to the composition as well as more action.
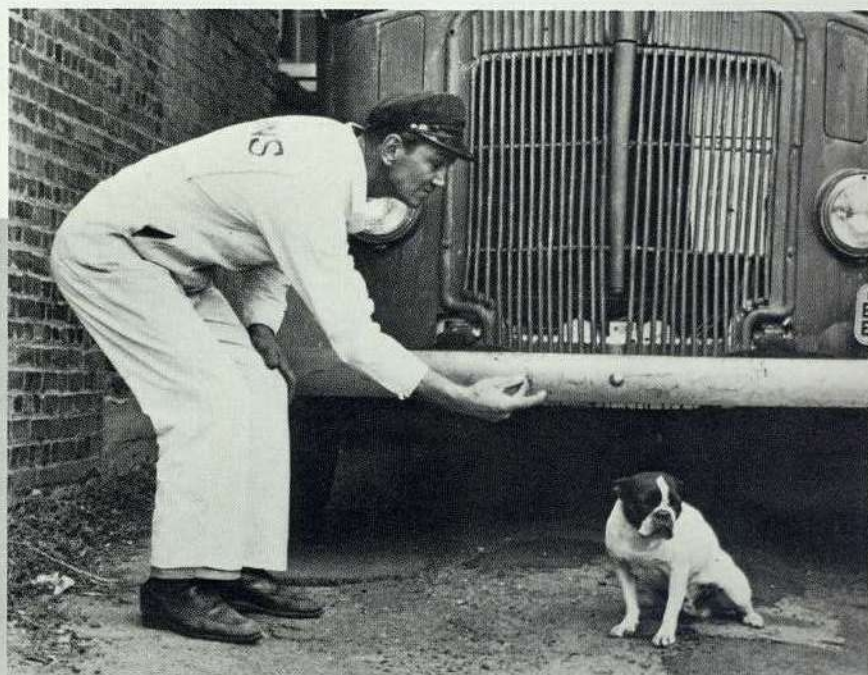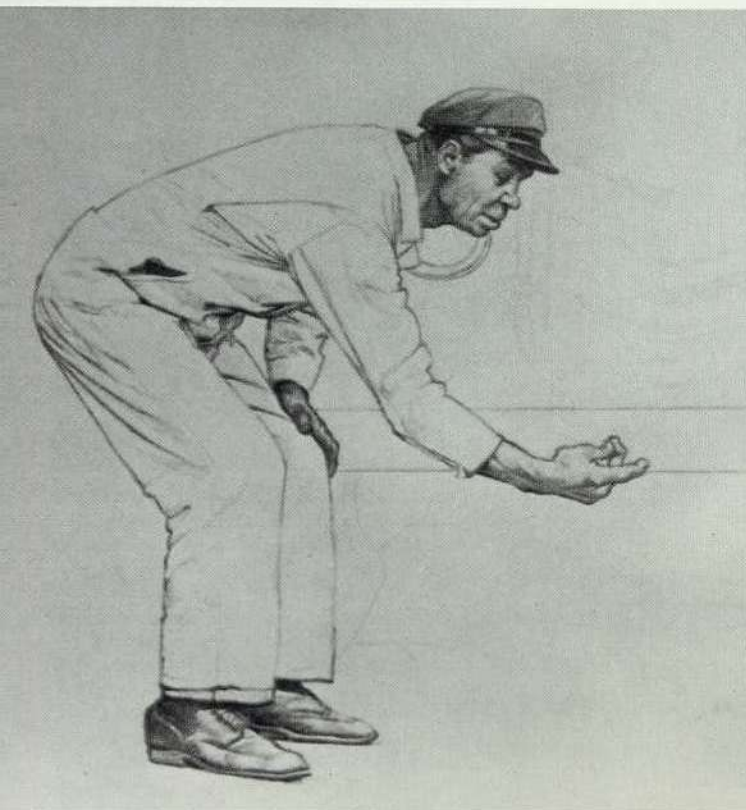
14 The moving man I used with the dog was one of those who came with the truck. As you will observe, I caricatured him a bit and I am afraid he did not like it. The dog was the property of the Barry Fitzgerald character on the porch and I did no better by the pup than I did by the moving man. I tried to make the pup look a little tough. I wanted him to be cute but I also wanted him to look like a dog not to be trifled with. I exaggerated the roughness and toughness of the moving man's hands because I wanted to show the rugged characteristics of a husky trucker. I learned later that his wife was quite upset by the way I portrayed him. He told me she would not allow the cover picture around the house.
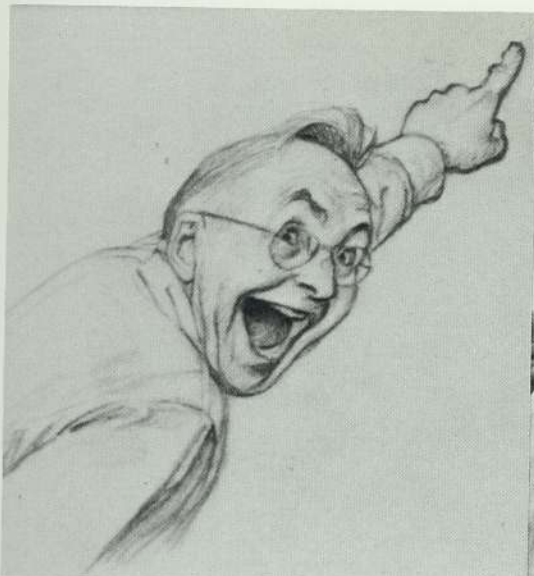
15 After I had drawn Peter and his violin, it seemed to me that this corner did not have anything in it to direct the attention of the observer to the dog. So I asked an art instructor friend to do some pointing and introduced this character to balance the line of the edge of the sidewalk on the opposite side and thus direct the observer's eye toward the center of interest. His excited face also helps pick up the interest and excitement.

16 This is the photograph of the clothes on the line which I used. As you can see, I made only slight changes because I arranged the clothes about the way I wanted them to appear. I chose this particular alley as the scene of my picture because it showed different stratas of American city life. On the right is the rather rundown private home which has been converted into a rooming house. Further back on the right is a quite fashionable apartment house while on the left is a large building containing apartments, studios and shops. Always try to find the typical for a picture, thus giving the observer the chance to recognize the things which are familiar to him. If you do this, he can live and feel himself in the picture story you are telling. Of course I introduced the clothes on the line because they were characteristic of the neighborhood — and because they offered an opportunity for bright color. The pigeons give life and movement and help to swing the composition around at the top of the picture. I swiped the pigeons from pictures I found in an old *National Geographic Magazine* which, by the way, is a wonderful source for many kinds of picture material.

17 These were all of the models I used except for the violin teacher at the top. And that's me! I had run out of models by that time, so I poked my face out of the window for free, told the photographer to do his worst — and he did.

18 The young woman at the window was a roomer in the house in which she posed and she cheerfully volunteered to peer out of her own window for me. She was not particularly important but I felt I ought to break up the outline of the truck just about where she appears. The truck was owned by the Bekins Storage Company and the change to "Pepies" was a simple way to keep the letter spacing the same and still not give the storage company some free advertising which I knew *The Post* would not stand for. Note that the name "Bekins" can easily be printed right over my "Pepies" but I reversed the process.
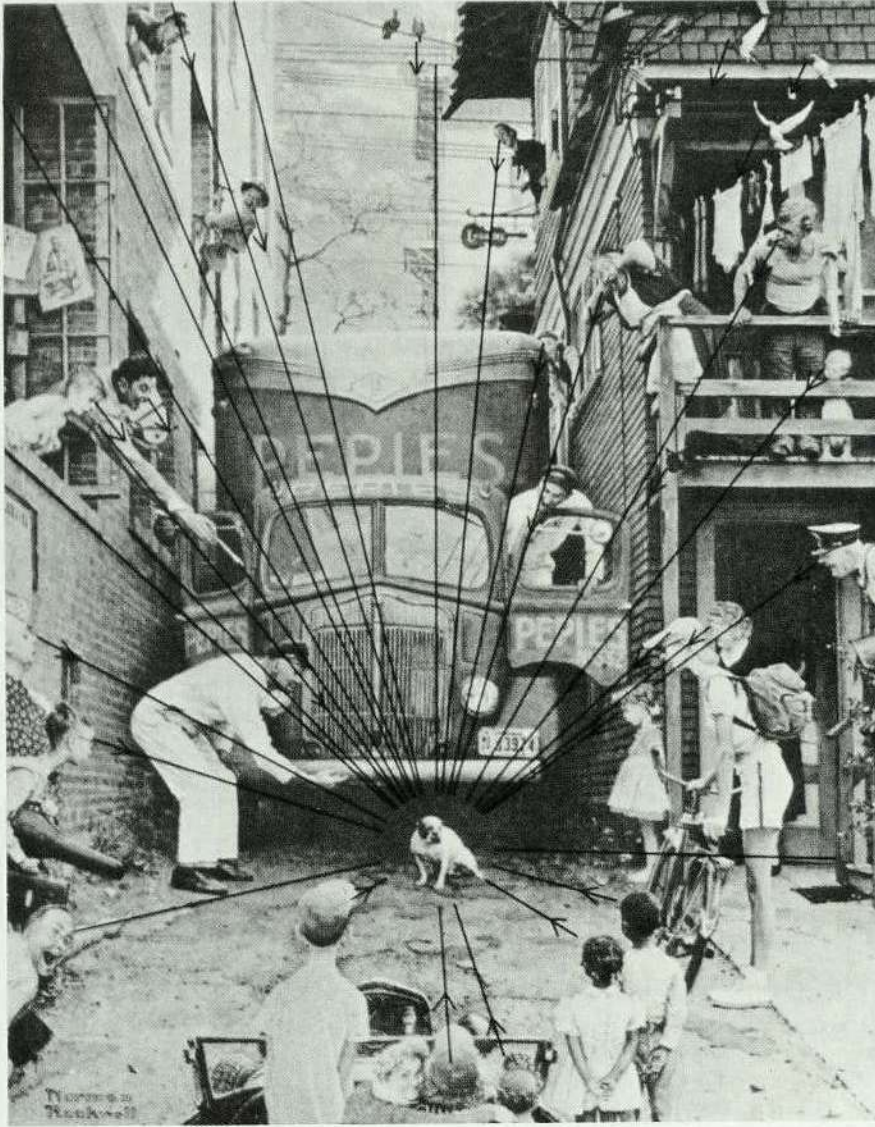
One of the best ways to make an observer look at the point in a picture you wish him to see is to show the characters in your picture also looking at that point. The reader naturally will look there, too, and the point — in this case, the pup — becomes the center of interest. My main effort here was to create a scene peopled with characters which were realistic enough to be convincing, but at the same time I wanted to draw them so they all had a certain creative and imaginative quality. I wanted the whole picture to have the quality, let us say, of the people in a story by Dickens. His characters all seem real, yet they belong in a world of their own.

What I did and why I did it

Of course, as I said, I took many more photographs but the ones shown here represent the complete cast of characters. The purpose of showing these photographs and sketches has been to demonstrate how I am attempting to get away from the direct use of photographs by making freehand sketches from them. I feel that the characters which I produce in this way more nearly express those which I have in mind and which I am trying to portray.

After I had finished making my sketches from the photographs, I had photographs taken of the sketches and, with the help of the Balopticon, I projected them onto the master drawing. Then, with HB Venus pencils I finished the tone values of the drawing, using 5B Venus pencils for the deeper shadows. This completed my preliminary drawing and it took me about ten days to do the job. It was, perhaps, the most elaborate preliminary that I have ever made.

One of the main effects for which I strove was to make virtually every line in the picture lead directly to the center of interest — the pup. When you can do this in a picture it is always a fine thing because the device obviously leads the eye of the observer directly to what you want him to see.

Finally, so that no one could possibly overlook the pup, I virtually made a bull's eye of him by creating a circle around him. The circle begins with the window cleaner and goes right around counter-clockwise until it reaches the top of the picture at the violin teacher. Thus I made doubly sure that the pup would have the spotlight.

Look Ma — No Balopticon

Here are examples of free drawing—*without* the Balopticon—carried right up to and even into caricature. It is lots of fun because it really tests your ingenuity and knowledge of draftsmanship. First of all, it is obvious you could not get kids into these wild poses long enough to even photograph them. So you approximate the poses as best you can, then use the old bean, the imagination and the makeshift photographs to tell the whimsical story you want to relate.

I really gave the kids who posed a workout and they loved it. In fact, I had quite a workout myself. You will note that I exaggerated the skinny arms and legs, enlarged the hands and feet, then really went to town on the facial expressions. Many subjects cannot and should not be caricatured in this manner, but when you have the opportunity to do it, it's a picnic because you can really let yourself go and throw the old Balopticon out the window (temporarily).

The method I use for this sort of thing is to make a rough drawing on tissue first. In this first drawing I put every bit of spirit and fun I can possibly summon and try to be completely free and creative. If I don't get what I want the first time, I discard the tissue and try again until I do. When I do find that I am getting what I want, I trace the rough drawing onto my fine white illustration board and carry it through, trying to keep the spirit and fun of my rough but carrying it further. This is loads of fun and if you can express that fun and convey it through your drawing to others, then you are really functioning as an illustrator.
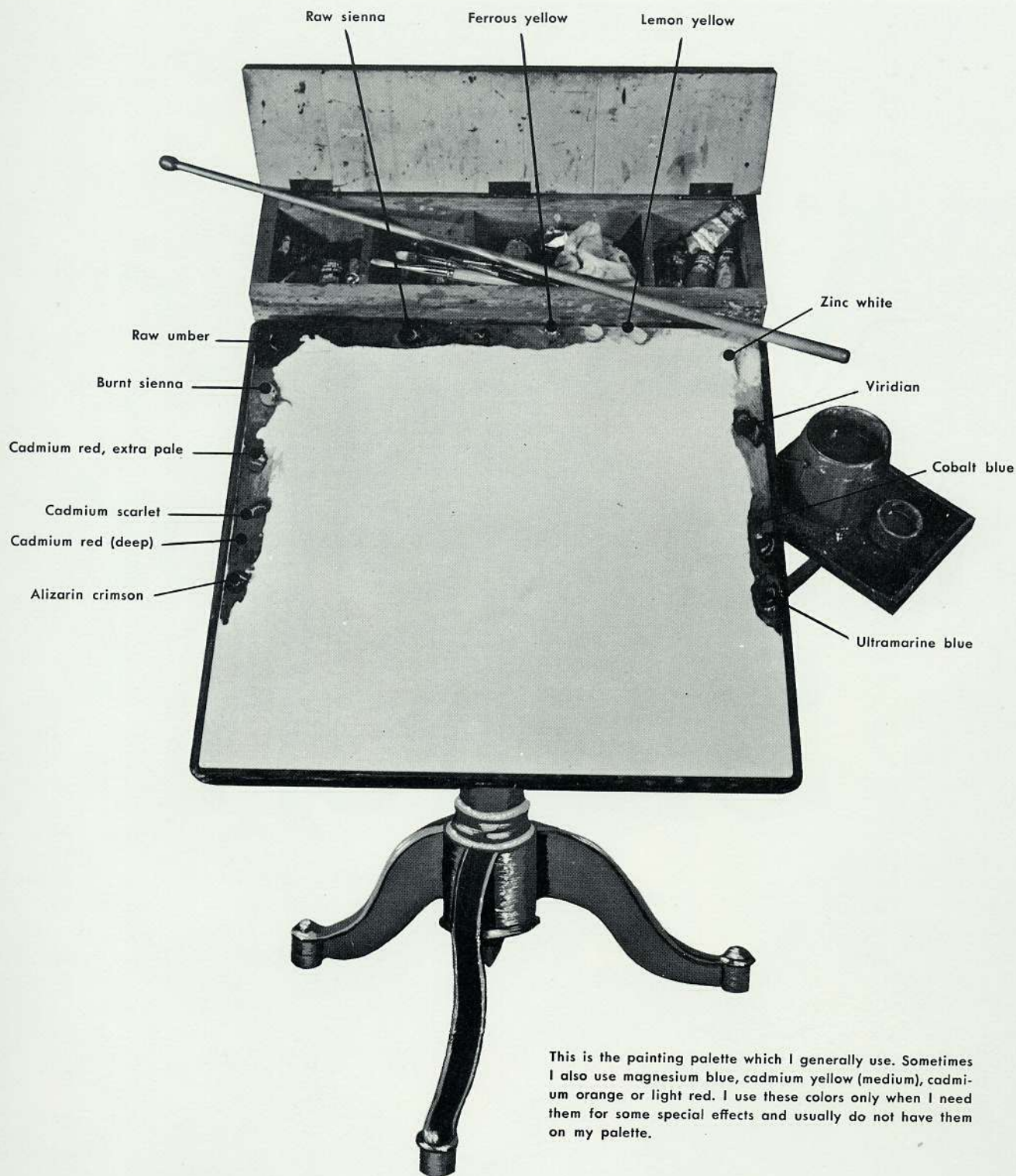
This drawing was made with oil paint on canvas. It is 12 inches wide and 13½ inches high.

Making the Color Sketch

Raw sienna   Ferrous yellow   Lemon yellow

Raw umber

Burnt sienna

Cadmium red, extra pale

Cadmium scarlet

Cadmium red (deep)

Alizarin crimson

Zinc white

Viridian

Cobalt blue

Ultramarine blue

This is the painting palette which I generally use. Sometimes I also use magnesium blue, cadmium yellow (medium), cadmium orange or light red. I use these colors only when I need them for some special effects and usually do not have them on my palette.

The Color Sketch

In the preceding two lessons we considered the charcoal and pencil layout techniques. To me, the layout is the most creative and also the most difficult step in making human interest pictures because in it you must tell your story completely so that everyone will understand it and be interested in it. No matter how gorgeous your color or how clever your technique in finishing the picture, these qualities will not save it unless your layout is good in the beginning.

The next step is the color sketch which we consider in this lesson. I make my color sketches for four reasons:

1. To study the color scheme which I will use in my final painting.
2. To establish my values.
3. To determine just how I am going to finish the picture technically.
4. To be able to refer back to nature, I make color sketches directly from the model. This seems like a lot to expect of a color sketch, so I will explain in detail what I mean.

The color sketch as a color sketch

My system involves photographing the charcoal or pencil layout and making an enlarged photographic print that is the exact size of the picture as it will be reproduced. When the color sketch is finished I then have the advantage of being able to see just about how the picture will look to the observer when it appears in the magazine. I always have the print dried flat, not glossy, so it will not be slippery to paint on. Next I mount the print with LePage's glue on a considerably larger, heavy piece of cardboard. Mounting the print flat is not easy, but if you spread the glue evenly and thinly, use a roller, then weight it down with a pile of books, you usually can do a good job.

Next, from regular mat board I cut a clean white mat that will frame the picture, usually allowing a three-inch border. Making a mat at this stage may seem silly, but when I make a color sketch I paint out beyond the borders of the print, so unless I have the white mat, I never can really judge the quality of my color sketch. Of course, when the sketch is finished, I glue the mat onto the cardboard which holds the color sketch, then trim the outer edges with my mat knife. Some of my color sketches are, I am sorry to say, better than the finished paintings and I often sell them or give them to friends. Incidentally, I always have three photo prints made so that if the first one does not jell, I will have another print to work on. Sometimes, even though I may have fairly good luck with the first color sketch, I like to make another in order to make a comparison with the first one. On occasion, I have made as many as five finished color sketches for one picture.

When I have the print arranged so it is ready to paint on, I set out my paints on my palette as illustrated at the beginning of the lesson. I use Shiva colors which are made by the Shiva Company, Goethe Street, Chicago, Illinois. I suppose they might be called fairly expensive but they are extremely good. The same company manufactures an excellent line of casein colors and a good line of painting mediums and varnishes.

I advise you to use the best materials. All of us have trouble enough without handicapping ourselves with poor equipment. In addition, you will find that cheap oil colors actually cost you more in the end because you must use more paint from the tube to obtain a desired effect. I have always believed in using quality tools and materials.

I knew an illustrator years ago who had plenty of talent, was ambitious and willing to work hard, but who was unbelievably economical around the studio. He never did quite make the grade and I honestly believe it was because he used cheap, inferior materials and was stingy with what he did use. One day he asked me over to criticize a picture he was doing and I noticed his palette. He had the colors all in place but there was only the tiniest particle of each color laid out. He asked me to paint a bit on the sketch in one section. I took a dab of one color with the brush and that eliminated all of that color from his palette, so I took the tube and squirted out a moderate fresh supply without even thinking. My friend nearly fainted. I truly believe that if he had only used decent brushes and good paint he could have made a real name for himself.

On my color sketches, which are the exact size of the reproductions, I use sable brushes because bristle brushes are too large for so small a sketch. I use Winsor-Newton water color sables. I have never liked the flat sables that are made for oils because they cause me to paint too "slick." I use turpentine to clean my brushes while I work and Shiva artist's medium as my painting medium. I paint even these small sketches on my regular vertical easel but of course I use a mahlstick.

While I am making the charcoal layout I also am thinking occasionally about my color ideas for the picture, so I do not come to the color sketch completely without ideas. However, before I start the color sketch, I sit and gaze at the layout and try to determine or "feel" just what color scheme would be of most help in telling the story and expressing the mood I wish to convey. Of all the qualities in a painting, color is, perhaps, the most dependent on your own personal taste. A very fine sense of color is mostly a gift — you have it or you don't have it. It ranges all the way from total color blindness up to the most subtle and exquisite color perceptions. But most of us fairly normal people have fairly normal color sense and taste and, with plenty of hard work plus a fair amount of intelligence, we may achieve a color sketch that is pleasing to the eye and will do the job we want it to do.

I usually start my color sketches by rapidly painting in the flesh tones of the figures in my picture. I do this because I find that you can let yourself go in the color of clothes, props and even landscapes, but people must look human and believable, at least where their skin shows. The abstractionists and the extreme modern painters have the advantage of us realists here. They can paint a face pale green or bright blue and get away with it. But we realists who must try to make our work convincing must stick to realism — and I personally am not sorry this is so.

Of course, the flesh color varies with the people and the lighting in your picture. Naturally flesh in moonlight, firelight and plain daylight is quite different but in a human interest picture it always must be realistic and convincing. Obviously this restricts your color range — you just can't go "hog wild." After I have indicated my flesh tints, I go on with the rest of the picture, trying to make my color just as interesting, bright and harmonious as the subject permits.

The problem here was to get a feeling of spring in the picture, to put over the idea of the enthusiastic garde who finds the first seed in his garden has sprouted. I had to make three sketches before I arrived at a c scheme that suited my taste and expressed the mood of the subject. There was not enough feeling of sp sunshine in the first one, and the trousers of the man did not contrast sufficiently with the background. In the ond sketch I got a stronger feeling of light and a more dramatic pattern by establishing a stronger silhou for the figure, the watering can and the foreground. But the over-all effect still was not springlike enough the subject. In the third sketch the colors and values give a feeling of spring sunshine in the air that prop expresses the idea and helps tell the story.
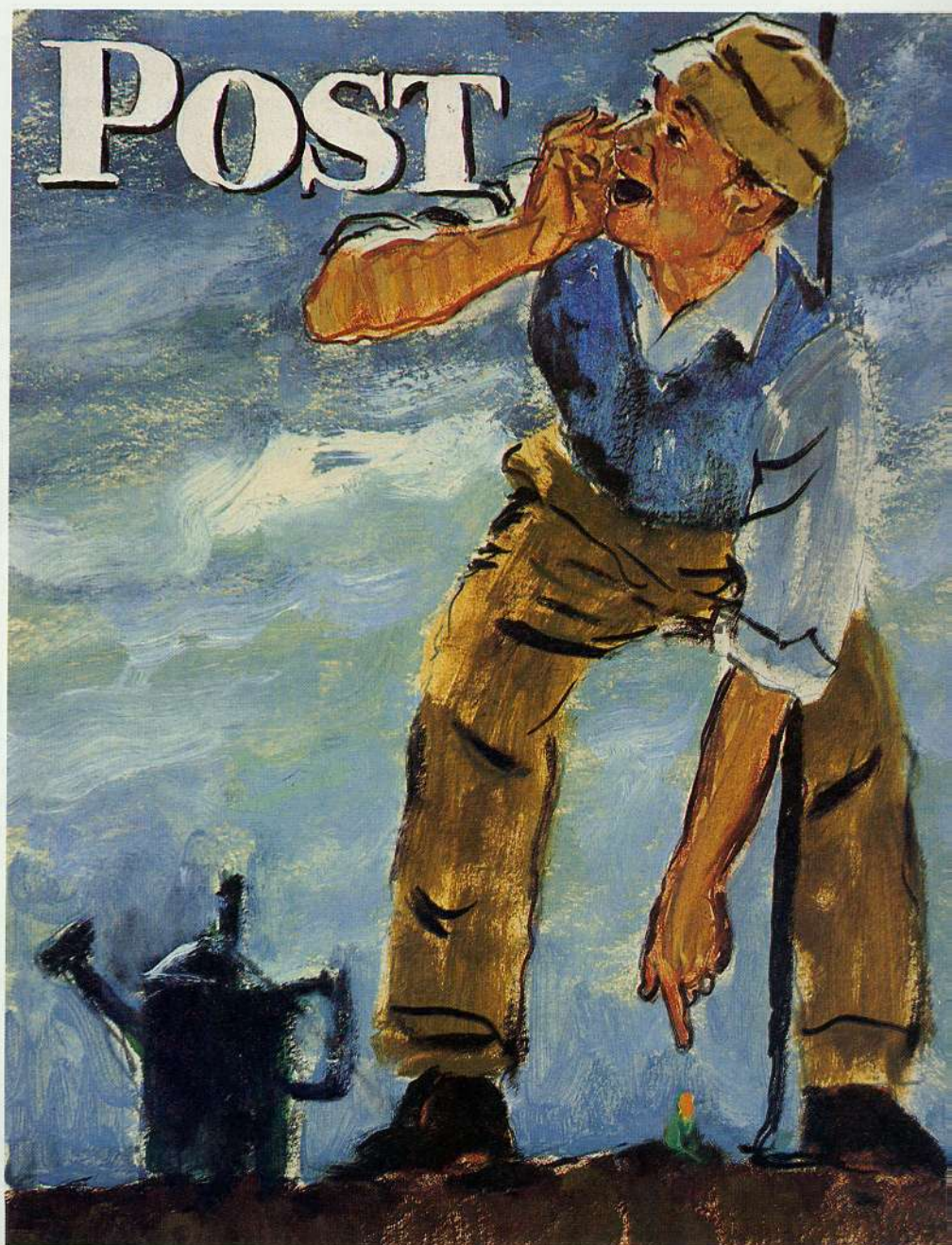
Frequently I want to make a slight change in a color sketch. Then, instead of doing the entire sketch over, as I did in the case of the gardener on the opposite page, I fasten pieces of cellophane over the color sketch with Scotch tape. On the cellophane I try out the new color arrangement. I can then lift the new color scheme from the drawing and quickly compare it with the original arrangement. In this case I wanted to try a different set of colors on the backs of the bridge players' chairs. Sometimes, when pushed to meet a deadline, I do not have time to make several complete color sketches. In such cases I make so many changes of this sort on cellophane overlays that the sketch looks like a veritable patchwork quilt. Even after starting the final painting I sometimes decide to try another color scheme for some part of the picture and I resort to the same time-saving device.

Using the color sketch
to establish my tone values

In making my charcoal or pencil layout, especially if it is quite a finished drawing, I use quite a little tone and think quite a bit about my tone values. I often find this solves many of my value problems as I paint my color sketches. At this stage you are using oil paint that covers areas so easily and your sketch really shows an over-all tone scheme much more clearly. After all, a color sketch that is carried fairly well along really is a miniature of the final painting.

In my own case, I work in a great amount of detail but I try to keep a simple tonal composition. In your color sketch you can decide just where you want your lightest light and your darkest dark. And if your tone composition is not just what you want, it is much easier to change it or start another in the sketch form than to get all mixed up in the final large painting.

Be careful not to carry the color sketch so far that there will be no fun left in the final job. Some subjects require little work in the color sketch while other and more complicated ones need to be carried further. I have often made the mistake of carrying the sketch too far, wearing out my enthusiasm before I get to the final job. This question of how far to carry your color sketch, of course, is something that you must determine for yourself. In fact, all my procedures are just my way of painting. I have found after forty years of work that these methods suit me. They may not suit you but they are worth trying. Then, undoubtedly, you will develop ways of working best suited to your own particular talent and personality.

Remember, your values and tone composition help or hinder the story or feeling you wish to convey. If your idea is a gay one, it should be light and gay in tone. If your subject is tragic and grim, your tone should be dark and somber. If it is lively and animated, your tone should be that way, too. This sounds too basic to even mention but think how often you have seen an illustration spoiled because the artist did not follow this simple and obvious rule. We all need to remind ourselves constantly that each bit of *color, tone, line* and *detail* should be in a picture only if it helps to tell the story simply and beautifully. If it doesn't *help*, it *ruins*.

In this picture the correct tonal values were more important than the color so I concentrated on the relationship of the values. In this version I tried a night effect but when it was finished it seemed too dull, and it also seemed inappropriate for the subject — a young boy traveling alone on a train.


Here I established a more cheerful mood through the use of a higher key, and it better expresses the subject matter. The most interesting and important elements are the two heads, the boy's purse and the other objects on the table. I was able to focus attention on them by making them dark and contrasting them with a background high in key and of closely related values.

Usually I make the color sketch the same size as the picture will appear when printed, but, when limited for time, I make smaller sketches. Such was the case here. It was not necessary for me to draw the picture in full detail to determine whether I wanted to use a light silhouette against a dark background or a dark silhouette against a light background. Once I have determined the basic over-all color scheme and tonal relationship, I then can make a detailed color sketch if that seems desirable.

This color sketch is reproduced in the same size it was painted. Here I knew very definitely how I was going to paint the finished picture because all of the details had been worked out carefully in the preliminary charcoal drawing. All I needed to do here was to establish my color scheme and the relationship of values.
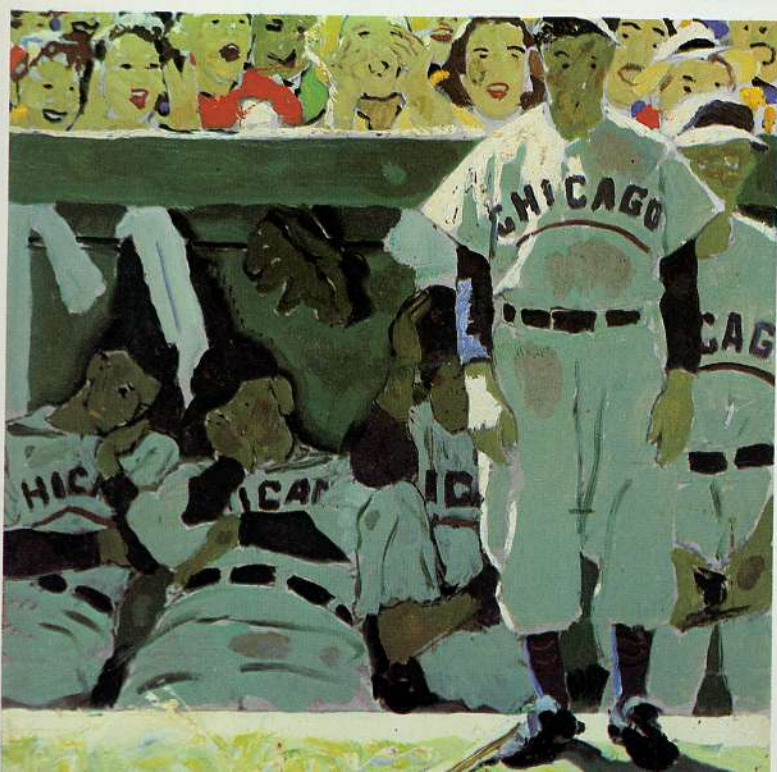
Here is a color sketch I did and a photograph of me while I was doing it. If you will examine the photograph you will observe that I already had worked out the details of the picture very carefully. I had done intensive research and taken a lot of photographs, some of which are on the easel at the left. I also had made a large, carefully detailed charcoal drawing which is tacked to the big board. In working on the color sketch here I was anxious to establish two things: (1) the color scheme I wanted to use, and (2) the technique in which I wanted to paint the finished canvas. I was well rewarded for the time spent in all of this preliminary work because when I started painting the finished picture I knew exactly what to do. I knew the color scheme, the relationship of values and the manner in which I wanted to apply the paint to the canvas. With the aid of a mahlstick, I painted the color sketch on the easel, just as I do the finished painting.

Color sketch helps decide the final painting

With the drawing done, I can very often get the feeling of just how I will do the final job technically while I am painting in color and tone on the sketch. Do I want to start with a casein underpainting? Do I want to load the underpainting heavily? Or maybe I do not want to underpaint at all, but work very directly. Perhaps I feel that the color scheme dictates a glazing technique. You will find that your color sketch does a lot more than just solve a color scheme — it really prepares you for the final job. I do my color sketches quickly, usually finishing one in half a day or less. Of course, sometimes I am stumped tempo

orman Rockwell

I made this sketch the same size as it was to appear on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*. This is a typical example of a color sketch in which I established (1) the color scheme, (2) the values, and (3) the technique for painting the finished picture. On page 162 you will see how I solved the fourth kind of color problem in color sketches made direct from the dog and boy. I wanted the boy to be a redhead so I established the flesh tones and the color of his hair first, then related the other colors to this fixed and dominant note.
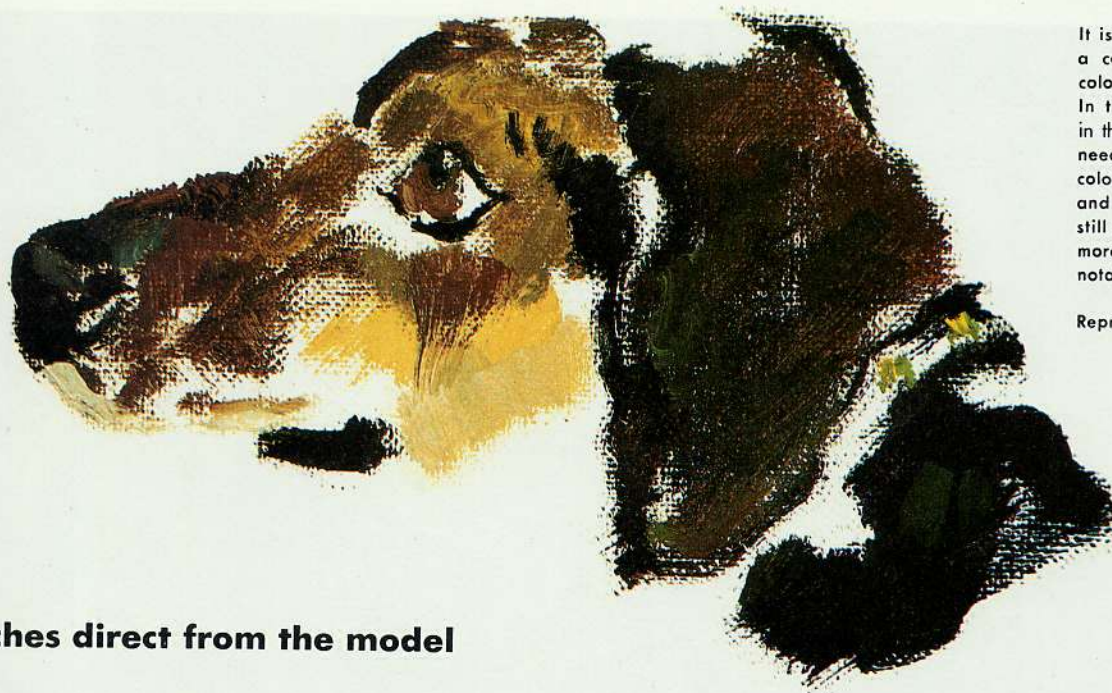
Color sketches direct from the model

The color sketches that I make direct from the model are quite different from those I have discussed up to now. These are simple sketches that I make to enable me to refer back to nature. I find that if I do not do these, I start to develop a color formula for painting flesh and my color becomes uninteresting, unconvincing and photographic.

I am always astonished by the terrific variation of colors in faces — colors you would never think to use if you did not refer directly to the model. Sketches direct from the model also give

you greater confidence when you paint the final picture. You do not waste time trying to make the face and its color interesting — you have the sketch and you *know*.

I also make color sketches of various details and objects such as hands, feet, shoes, gloves, and anything else which I feel possesses special color qualities that I can get far better from nature than from imagination. I do these very quickly. This is another step that invariably saves me time and pays dividends by enabling me to paint with greater conviction.

As explained on page 160, the established color note was the red hair and complexion of the boy. I made this color sketch directly from the model so the painting would have an authentic look. It then was a simple matter to relate the other colors in the picture to the boy's hair and skin.

• This sketch, made for another painting, shows that even in the most commonplace subjects there is an opportunity for observing new color schemes. In fact, it is in just such commonplace subjects that it is more important occasionally to make color

A case history

Sometimes a picture really stumps me and I must make numerous color sketches before arriving at what I consider is the correct solution. Such was the case in this picture of an early morning scene at a motel, showing a family about to depart and asking directions of the manager. I do not recommend making this many color sketches for each picture, but it is better to sweat it out, when necessary, and make additional sketches than it is to proceed with the first idea you have, then end up with a mediocre picture, after hours and hours of painting.

a small color sketch intended to establish the color scheme and tonal relationship. I saw immediately the picture did not possess a strong center of The two men looking at the map did not dominate composition sufficiently.


2 Here I moved the two men to the foreground and added other elements, such as the croquet mallets, to indicate the atmosphere of a tourist camp. But I did not like the color scheme or the relationship of values. The figure of the man packing the car and the light gables of the house competed too strongly with the important figure of the man pointing to the map.

3 Now the two men dominate the situation because of better tonal relationship. But there still seemed to be too much competition from the people and objects in the background because of a similarity in size. Also this might be a night scene, whereas I was trying to depict an early morning departure.

am getting somewhere. The tourist camp atmosphere well established but it is made definitely secondthe two men studying the map. I discarded this however, because the background seemed too important made the mistake of placing the camp in a definite the western mountains. This might appeal to tourhappened to have traveled in the West but would very meaningful to those who had not, and I like tures to appeal to as many people as possible.
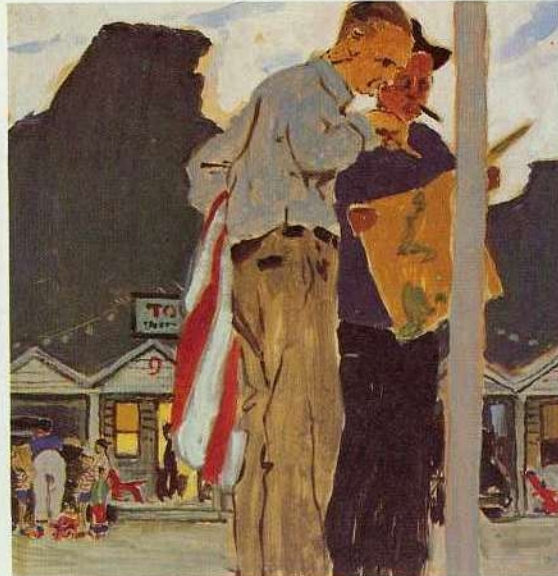
5 Here I have tried to simplify the picture further, but I still am having trouble with that background. I feel the need of trees or some shapes, but they compete with the main story and force me to be too specific about the location.

6 It was a tough fight, but I won! Now there is no unnecessary competition from the background. This camp could be located anywhere, and any tourist can enjoy this picture and project himself into it whether he has traveled in the mountains or not. The key of the picture and the color scheme better indicates early morning and people getting off to an early start. In the early versions it seemed to be a night scene I was depicting rather than a morning one. This picture has a further advantage. The figure in the foreground has more meaning because of the gesture of the extended right arm.

The Final Painting

Now we come to the last stage of making a picture — the final painting. It seems a good idea to start at the beginning and go right through the whole process, day by day, describing just what I do and how I do it in complete detail. So here goes!

The example I have selected was an illustration for an advertisement for the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company. Arthur Blomquist, senior art director of the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency, is a grand and understanding person. He gave me the necessary dimensions of the advertisement as it was to appear and its subject, "The First Day at School." Then he gave me a free hand to interpret the subject.

After thinking it over, I felt that because life insurance is a serious, thoughtful business, I would like to use a simple, fundamentally serious approach. What humor there was would be of a quiet, nostalgic type. In other words, I decided to try to evoke a feeling of the responsibilities of a father in order to make the observer think of life insurance protection.

I feel that this is most important. Do not make all of your appeals the same, but fit them to job requirements. Often the advertising agency hands you a complete layout on which it has spent much time and effort in order to get over a message. But even with such limitations, you can help point up the story by applying your intelligence. In this case there was no layout and I welcomed the opportunity to create my own appeal. I talked with Mr. Blomquist, showed him a very rough sketch, told him my ideas, and he liked them. Then I left New York, returned to my home at Arlington, Vermont, and got my models.

The false start (3½ days including one-half day getting models)

The false start

I got off to a false start because I overemphasized the serious approach. As you can see, the sketch is depressingly solemn. The boy looks like he is going to his doom, the father appears to be an over-sweet, kneeling saint, and the mother is too expressionless. I wasted three days on this. I was dissatisfied, but somehow could not realize what was wrong. I sent my charcoal layout down to Mr. Blomquist, who approved and returned it, but I still did not want to paint it. So I revised the whole composition, using a different mother and father.

norman rockwell

The second charcoal

I felt that this second version was not so terribly serious but still had a sympathetic approach and appeal. I did not want to clutter up the picture with a realistic interior showing wallpaper, furniture, etc. Instead I desired to concentrate on the human relationships. I used the raincoat on the father because it was nice to paint and I hate to paint a man's business suit. I liked the rocking chair because it seemed to improve the design and to symbolize home. The man's hat helped to tell the story that he is going with his son and also gave a spot of interest to a dull part of the composition. My signature also helped to design the picture. In this type of picture — the simple appeal — I try to show nothing not absolutely necessary to the composition and story. In this picture I feel that there is not a single item which could have been left out.

This second layout required another three days. There was a hard and fast deadline to meet, and I was worried that I could not get the picture finished in time. (My idea of an illustrator's heaven is plenty of work and no deadline.) I told Mr. Blomquist of the changes I had made. As always, he was very kind, but he, too, reminded me of that deadline.

The charcoal layout was done on architect's detail paper after it had been thoroughly rubbed as described in a preceding lesson, using medium soft charcoal. I used the Balopticon to blow up the figures, making the man's head a little smaller.

(This is always a good stunt when drawing men — it makes them appear nobler.) I made the man's body longer from the arms down and also lengthened his legs. The boy I traced as he was, but I made the woman considerably taller to avoid the camera perspective. You will also notice that I tilted her shoulders because I felt that this helped the composition.

When I was drawing and putting in the tones with charcoal I tried very hard to make the mother a sweet, sympathetic type. I also tried to make the man as kindly and fatherly as I could. In drawing the boy, I emphasized the boyish characteristics — the skinny neck, cute nose, plastered-down hair. I also emphasized the boxlike, rectangular shape of his coat and trousers.

You must do everything you can to make the drawing your own. Get your own viewpoint and personality into it. Love your characters and strain every stroke to tell how you feel about them. Otherwise a photograph is just as good.

Blowing up with the Balopticon took a little more than half a day and the charcoal work consumed two and a half days. This accounts for the three days previously mentioned. Next I had the layout photographed and blew it up on the canvas, which was 40 by 46 inches. I used a rough jute Belgian canvas, and when I blew up the completed charcoal I made the man a bit larger in comparison with his wife and child because I felt I had drawn him too small.
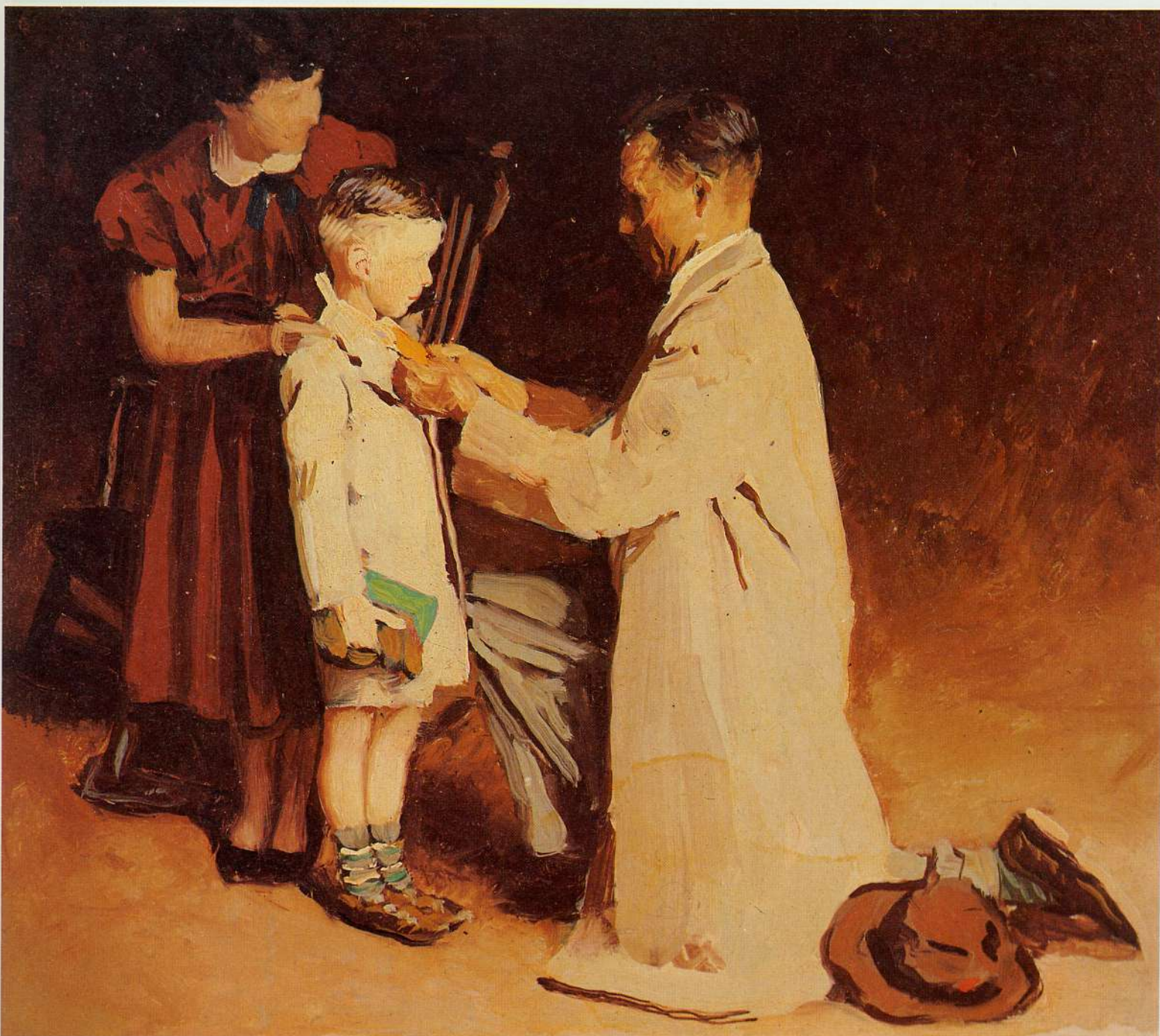
The color sketch (one-half day)

The color sketch

My next step was to make the color sketch. I had the photo print made the same size that the picture would be reproduced and glued the print to a piece of wallboard. I used rich, warm colors for the sketch, a sort of Rembrandt color scheme. I felt that this type of color best expressed the quiet, sincere appeal I wanted to convey. The binding color (the color I used in all the background and shadows) was Winsor & Newton Mars violet. I love this color because it is the warmest and richest I know.

I made everything in the sketch warm in color except the little boy's figure. I wanted him to be the center of interest in every way, so I painted him in a cool gray suit and socks. The pencil box, in light, cold blue, provided the greatest contrast here. I painted the boy's flesh high and light in tone and color, much lighter than the flesh of his mother and father. All this concentrated the interest on the boy. In this instance I made only one color sketch but sometimes I must make several.

At this stage I had the charcoal finished, the color sketch made and the charcoal outline on the canvas. Next I blew

plenty of fixative on the outline so it would not rub off when I treated the whole surface with a very thin wash of raw umber and turpentine. This is the "imprimatura" step, which always seemed like an over-elaborate name for such a simple stunt. It serves to make the canvas a little more sympathetic to work on, because a cold, gray canvas is more of a threat than an invitation. The color sketch took me half a day, and the blowing up of the photograph of the charcoal onto the canvas and applying the imprimatura required another half day.

Then I did my underpainting. I used only Mars violet and simply copied the tones of my charcoal layout. When I do this I try to use almost no medium and virtually do it dry brush. After I completed the underpainting (one and a half days) I loaded the white — that is, I applied it thickly. I used Shiva's Underpainting White, which is half casein and half oil white and loads very heavily and dries very quickly. In this picture I loaded the white colors only on the characters and the pencil box. I wanted the pencil box very clear.

The underpainting (1½ days including one-half day stretching canvas)

The underpainting

If you will examine the photograph of the underpainting when completed, you will notice that all the areas covered with Mars violet are very thinly painted. So next morning the underpainting was dry because the Mars violet was so thin and the white was half casein. Next I sealed off the entire underpainting by using a light coat of clear shellac thinned just a little with alcohol.

After you have sealed your underpainting with even a light coat of shellac, you can always rub off what you have painted and get right back to that underpainting when necessary because the paint and the medium you use will not cut through the shellac. Therefore you can always keep your underpainting, drawing and tone intact and if you get into trouble you can refer back to the underpainting merely by wiping off what you have done. This is fine insurance against "losing" your drawing and getting hopelessly bogged down in a picture.

The shellac dries very quickly, so by the time I was ready to begin painting in earnest, the surface was dry and ready for me. Thus began my first day of work on the final painting. I started at 8 o'clock and by 9:30 A.M. the shellac was dry and I went to work on the final background. I used Mars violet, ultramarine blue and burnt sienna in the darkest part, and for lighter shading toward the bottom of the picture I began using some raw sienna. Finally, at the lightest part I used white and ferrous yellow and ultramarine blue. I used the blue to cool the yellow; so the upper and darker part was warm in color but as the background grew lighter toward the bottom it became cooler. I painted the entire background with broken color, using those I have named.

After the background was painted, I washed in very thinly the various local colors, such as the red of the woman's dress, the tan of the raincoat and the gray of the boy's suit. This was just to get the general effect of the picture as far as color was concerned. If you do not do this, you are likely, for example, to paint the mother's head without any reference to the red of her dress, then find that when you paint in the dress the head is entirely too cool in color and must be repainted. I did not have a photograph made after this day of painting.

The final painting (end of second day)

Starting the painting

This is the way the painting looked at the end of the next day of work. It is difficult to see just what parts are finished in this black-and-white print, but if you will look carefully you can see that the boy's figure and the raincoat are done. Of course, after all the careful preliminary drawing, making the color sketch and doing the underpainting, the finished painting might be expected to proceed quite rapidly. People always seem astonished at the amount of preliminary work I do, but I believe that in the long run I make more and better pictures this way. Of course, I must point out here that this is only *my* way and may not suit your temperament or desires.

I always allow for a certain amount of *final*, final painting after the entire picture is "finished." After all, there is always some touching up at the very last. But at the stage where I am at this point, I paint just as though each bit of painting will be the final statement in every way.

On this day I began work at eight o'clock and had the boy painted by two in the afternoon, with a half hour out for lunch. Then I painted until six on the raincoat. I used only flat, medium-long bristle brushes — no sables — and painted

with Shiva oil colors. My palette was zinc white, lemon yellow (this is not made by Shiva so I used Winsor & Newton), ferrous yellow (which is like yellow ochre but I like the former better), raw sienna, burnt sienna, Mars violet (I use Winsor & Newton Mars violet because I do not like Shiva), cadmium red (extra pale), cadmium red deep, alizarin crimson, viridian, ultramarine blue, and pure manganese blue on the pencil box.

All the time I am painting I try most of all to express the original feeling I desire to convey. Here I tried especially to do this in painting the boy's head. I wanted to make him as cute and lovable and as symbolic of childhood as possible. But also I had to avoid over-sweetness, which only revolts the normal person. I made the boy's white collar the purest, cleanest white I could so the observer could not help but be attracted by this accent. Then later I painted the blackest black in the picture on the brush and comb so the darkest dark and the lightest light were right where I wanted the emphasis to be. You will note in the finished picture that the collars of the father and mother are much lower in tone and cannot conflict in interest with the boy's collar. This is very important.

The final painting (end of third day)

Halfway through

On the following day I painted the father's hat, shoes and trousers, and the rocking chair, as you can see by comparing this illustration with the preceding one. I tried to make the hat and rear shoe as interesting as possible because they are the only objects in this part of the picture. This third day's painting wasn't much fun compared with painting hands, heads, etc., but it had to be done so I stayed with it, working from about 8:00 or 8:30 in the morning until 6:30 — time for dinner.

On the fourth day I painted all of the mother. The photo-

graph I used in painting the mother's head did not show her features too clearly but I tried my best to make her an appealing, loving mother. I painted her head much lower in key than the boy's head in order to keep the emphasis on the boy. I really enjoyed this day of painting because I got a lot done and it was interesting to do. I kept to my regular hours of work because the due date hung over me and I knew I had to keep right on schedule. You just can't afford to have the so-called artistic temperament and be an illustrator.

norman rockwell

The finished painting

This illustration shows the father's head and hands completed, and the final painting finished except for those final touches. I spent the fifth day just doing the head and the hands. Now I knew I could make the deadline so I used the sixth day to put on the final touches. This is a real pleasure because the really tough work is done, so it is just a matter of tuning things up here and there to help bring the whole picture together.

No picture ever really satisfies me. If you become satisfied with your work, you are through! I dream that every picture I start is going to be a wonderful one. In my mind it has infinite possibilities, but as I go on painting and am forced to face realities the dream begins to fade and I realize it is going to be just another picture. Then comes the time when I have to call on all my character and resolution to go ahead with the painting. Finally, if all goes well, toward the end a small part of the hope for a good picture returns and I finish it. But the finished job never is up to the dream at the start. If, in the course of a year, I have done three pictures of which I am at all proud, I have had a pretty good year.

In terms of time, the painting which we have considered worked something like this:

One-half day getting models
Three days on the first charcoal
Three days on the second charcoal
One-half day on the color sketch
One-half day stretching canvas
One day on the underpainting
Five days on the final painting

That is about thirteen and a half days for the completed job and that is good going for me. After all, it was a simple picture and I had to make a deadline. I have spent as much as two and a half months on one picture, but I believe my average is about three weeks to a job. I believe the best work is done when you skip right along, but when a picture presents difficulties you must learn to stick with it and solve each problem to the best of your ability. After all, if a picture is really good everyone who sees it will admire and like it — and even the art director will forget after awhile that it was delivered a few days late. But if it is a poor picture whose only virtue is that it was delivered on time, everyone will criticize it.
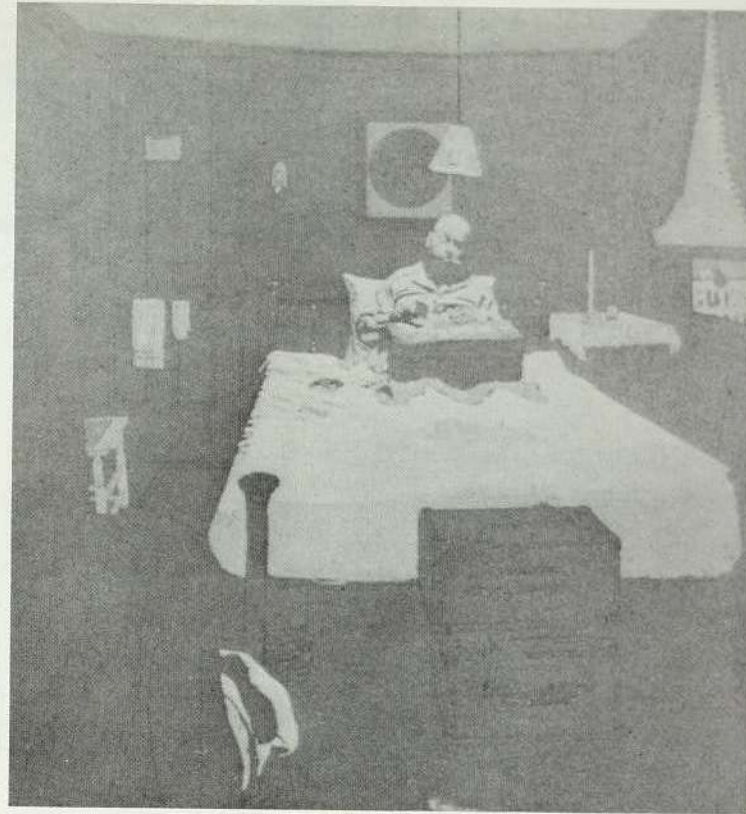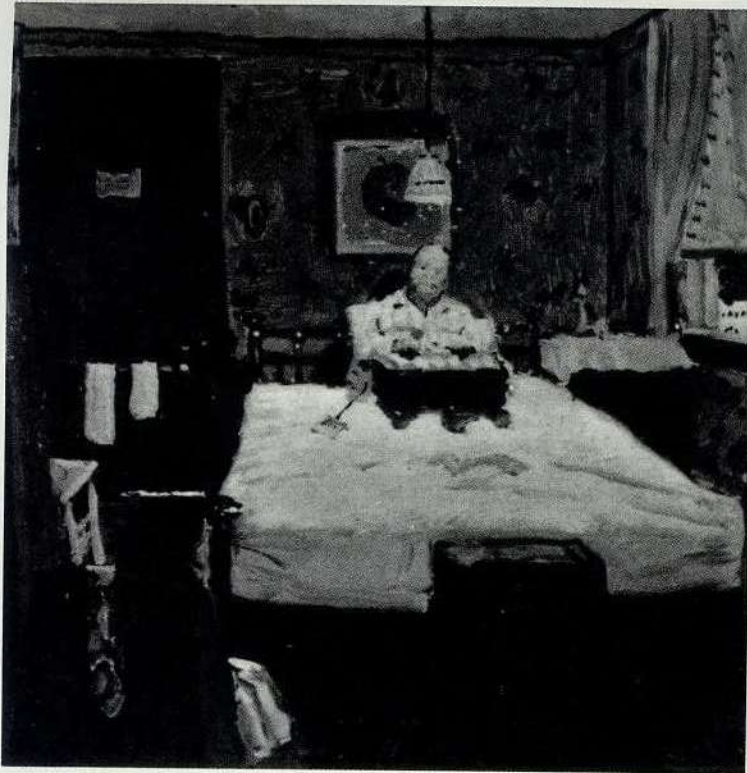
Think things through in advance

A warm red was the dominant color in this Post cover. It appears in everything except the bed linen, the towels on the door, the white chair, the tablecloth and the sign outside the window. In the color sketch I was concerned only with establishing the correct color and value relationships. All other details had been worked out carefully in a charcoal drawing.

The photograph of the underpainting shows the imprimatura on the canvas. This was done with transparent glazes of red which permitted the charcoal drawing to show through. Some of the light areas were accentuated by covering them with opaque white. I find it very important to establish the projected tone and color relationships on the finished canvas as soon as possible. This enables me to keep all the details properly subordinated to the picture as a whole. Underpainting of this kind insures a more harmonious relationship of colors.

This is just another demonstration that you must think things through at all times. Imagination and inspiration are essential for successful pictures but they are not all that is necessary. Organization of your work is important, if your imagination and inspiration are to be expressed fully. It is for this reason that I stress the importance of having your picture completely under control at all stages. Just as a reminder, here are some of those important stages—and never proceed from one stage to the next until you are sure that you have solved all of the problems that must be solved in the stage you are finishing:

1. The doodle or idea sketch.
2. Selection of the model and props.
3. Photographing the models.
4. The charcoal drawing.
5. The color sketch.
6. The imprimatura.
7. The final painting.
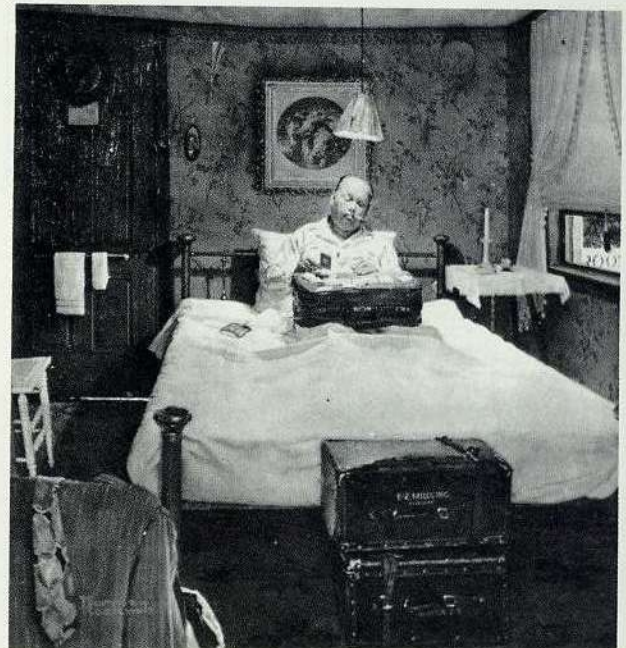
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